

MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

एतद्देशं प्रसूतस्य सकाशादग्रजन्मनः ।
स्वं स्वं चरित्रं शिक्षेरन् पृथिव्यां सर्वमानवाः ॥
येनास्य पितरो याता येन याताः पितामहाः ।
तेन यायात् सतां मार्गं तेन गच्छन् रिप्यते ॥

Manu

MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

(AN ATTEMPT TO GET AT THE HINDU SPIRIT IN
CONNECTION WITH THE MAYO CHALLENGE)

BY

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DEDICATED

TO

SLAVES OF THE GODS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Hinduism has fallen on evil times and evil tongues and pens. We therefore tried to secure the services of the best exponent of the Hindu point of view to present the other side of the shield. That we have succeeded in our attempt will be evident from the character-sketch of our author from the pen of no less a connoisseur of character than Sij Bipin Chandra Paul, the accredited leader of the Bengal Nationalists in the Swadeshi regime, who wrote it for his "Swaraj", a monthly organ published in England in 1909 while he was there. It was pronounced the most faithful representation of the man by his once distinguished chief, Sri Aurobindo Ghose, and reproduced in its entirety in his "Karmayogin," in 1909.

Srijut Syam Sunder Chakravarti, before his deportation last December, was known outside Bengal, mainly through his connection with the "Bande Mataram" newspaper. He was present at the Congress that failed at Surat, where his simplicity of life and habits, his steadfast devotion to the Nationalist cause, his uncompromising regard for the ideals and principles that stand for Nationalism in India, won him the admiration and love of the large body of Nationalists gathered from all parts of the country. Henceforth he came to be

regarded as one of the leaders of the movement on the Bengal side.

In his own province, however, Syam Sunder has been long known as a very capable Bengali journalist and writer. His paper the "Pratibasi" occupied the foremost place among Bengali weeklies, in regard to its thoughtfulness, sobriety, and superior literary character. But popular and sensational journalism has, to a very large extent, destroyed the chances of success of high class literary journals in Bengal, as elsewhere; and the "Pratibasi" succumbed after a few years to the severe financial strain under which it lived and laboured almost all through its life. When the "Sandhya" was started by the late Brambo Bandhab Upadhaya, Syam Sunder joined its staff, and his simple and racy style contributed very largely to the unique success which that paper attained at one part of its life. When the "Bande Mataram" was organised as a joint stock concern, about the end of 1906, Syam Sunder left the "Sandhya" and joined its staff, and he was, to a very large extent, the very life and soul of that paper, until it was suppressed by the Government last November. A few weeks later, Syam Sunder was himself arrested and deported under

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Regulation III of 1818 without any public indictment or trial.

Syam Sunder belongs to a generation that came very largely under the influence of the Hindu Revival of the closing quarter of the last century. Unlike Aswini Kumar, Krishna Kumar or Monoranjan,—Syam Sunder had never broken away from the ancient thoughts and traditions of his people, and, consequently, while Aswini Kumar and Monoranjan represent what may be called the return movement in Bengali thought and life of our time, Syam Sunder represents the type of staunch nationalism that comes through the natural and instinctive conservatism of every people. He has, of course, come under the rationalistic influence of his age, and has had, therefore, to work out some sort of synthesis between old ideas and institutions on the one side, and the new thoughts, aspirations, and conditions on the other. But he did not come through any open antithesis or protest but grew naturally, and almost unconsciously through the normal evolution of his intellectual and social environments.

No revival can really revive the past, just as it was in the past. It has to adjust the past

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to the living conditions of the present. A successful revival must, therefore, offer a new view-point and a new synthesis. It is in such a synthesis that the Hindu Revival in India of the last quarter of a century has had its main strength. And it must be admitted that the underlying thought of this Revival has more or less openly and consciously taken note of the protest of reason raised by the Bramho Samaj and other religious movements of our day.

Neo-Hinduism, as it is called, is not really the Hinduism of our fathers; it is a new phase, a new development, a new interpretation, and a new adjustment of the old and traditional ideals, in the light of present needs and conditions. Every reaction means, as Emerson says, the halt of reason and its movement backward to pick up some neglected truth that had been previously lost sight of and left on the way. The movements of protest inaugurated under alien influences, had left many a precious truth behind. They had ever emphasized the unreason and injustice of ancient thoughts and institutions, and had therefore overlooked the soul of truth and the counterpoise of good that lie mixed up everywhere with falsehoods and evils. These movements

were more or less forced from the outside, through the influence of imported ideas and ideals, and these latter brought in their train their own necessary counterpoise of falsehoods and evils, which being foreign to the thought and life of the people, met with no natural antidote that society almost unconsciously and automatically always and everywhere provides against the necessary evils of its own native life and thought. All these combined to contribute to the strength of the reaction which passed over the country during the closing decades of the last century. It obstructed the advance of the aggressive religious and social reform movements visibly ; but all the same, contributed to the general progress of thought and life, almost in every direction. The present Nationalist Movement in India is very largely indebted to this Reaction or Revival for a good deal both of its inner strength and its outer influence.

Syam Sunder is essentially a child of this Reaction. He has always clung to the spirit and traditions of his race with a tender tenacity, that, while recognising their frailties, yet shrank from ruthlessly rooting them up lest the sacred organism itself should be wounded and

injured in the operation. But he has also been sensitive to liberal influences, and has been sincerely respectful to the leaders of Bramho Samaj and other reform movements; but being essentially a man of sentiment he has never permitted his intellectual ideas and appreciations to weaken the hold of his affections upon his own country and people. His patriotism has always controlled his reason and prevented him from making any violent protest in the name of Reason against the thoughts, beliefs, traditions and institutions of his race.

Patriotism is really of two kinds, abstract and concrete. The social and religious reformer loves his country and his people as ardently and devotedly as any other person; but his patriotism is of the abstract kind. He loves only the good, the beautiful and the true, in his own country. He has no toleration for the bad, the ugly and the false. He is cast in the mould of the prophet—rigid, uncompromising, faithful to whatever is true and good, relentless in his war against whatever, in his eyes, is false and evil. His country is to him more of an ideality than a reality. Krishna Kumar's patriotism is essentially of this type, among us. But there

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is another class of patriotism also. It may be best characterised as concrete. It is not the love of an abstraction called country or nation. It loves its people in the concrete, just as they are, as mixture of both reason and unreason, of both good and bad. It loves its nation with a pure love, which sees the whole, seizes the totality, and in that totality finds an explanation for both its reason and unreason, its good and evils, and seeing both the light and shading together, it is able to realise the proper perspective of both. It is not blind to the faults and errors, the evils and weaknesses of its own nation, but only sees their natural explanations which others fail to see, and thus recognising the spirit of truth and goodness and the source of strength that lie hidden underneath them he seeks to remove and remedy them from within, by working up the latent goodness and strength; and is in the meantime lovingly tolerant of them. This is the character of what may be called concrete patriotism. Syam Sunder's patriotism is of this kind, and consequently, it is characterized by an intense conservatism, which is the soul of natural, as distinguished from philosophic, nationalism everywhere.

But Syam Sunder is by no means a rigid, hide-bound conservative. He is always prepared to move with the times, and, in practical life he has like almost every Nationalist, given up many of the obsolete institutions and usages of his country and his caste. Born of very high class Bramhin parents—his father was a well-known Adhyapak or professor of Bramhinical lore—he observes all the formalism of Bramhinical life, to the extent that these are demanded by the public opinion of his caste. But as far as that public opinion commended to become tolerant of heterodox habits and thoughts, Syam Sunder does not refuse to follow them. In fact, he does not even shrink from initiating these reforms, provided they do not create any vital disruption in social life. He is therefore as much at home with the orthodox Bramhin Pandit as with the heterodox England-returned civilian or Barrister. It is neither in eating nor drinking (though he is a teetotaller) that his Bramhinism ever seeks to assert itself. Neither is it in his pride of birth that it comes out. He mixes freely with all castes, and in private treats the Pariah with almost the same respect as he would render to a Bramhin, provided, of course, the former occupies in education and

character the same position as the latter. But all the inherent pride of race in the man comes out the moment when mere wealth seeks to assert itself over culture or character. In one sense, therefore Syam Sunder's spirit is perhaps the most democratic among the leading Nationalist workers in Bengal. But it is the democracy of the Bramhin, the claims of the intellect and the real man to equality, despite all differences in worldly position due to wealth or rank. It is the proud protest of the old spirit of intellectual and spiritual autocracy of Hinduism against the British-created aristocracy of land and lucre. Along with this pride of intellect and culture, Syam Sunder has also inherited from his Bramhin ancestors a tender humanity, which is almost feminine in its care for the weak and the bereaved. Extremely sensitive to the least suspicion of slight or neglect, Syam Sunder is also among the most selfless of our public men. Very poor himself, he has never refused to part with his last penny, to any one, friend or acquaintance, who stood in greater or even equal need of it. Poverty makes misanthropes in Europe, his own poverty has made something of a philanthropist of this chip of an old and aristocratic Bramhin block.

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How much of it is due to his inheritance in the supremely spiritual civilisation of his nation, and how much to his own personal temperament, it is difficult to say. But whatever may be their origin and their cause, all who have come into intimate contact with Syam Sunder, has found his impulses to be almost uniformly noble, and his ideas lofty.

FOREWORD

Miss Mayo wrote 'Mother India'. Educated India replied: "Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung." Apprehensive that the vile Hindu has been only scotched and not killed by her shower of unkindest cuts she has brought out another book, this time in fictional garb, named 'Slaves of the Gods', in the foreword to which she frankly states that it is her purpose "to re-declare and more strongly to emphasise a point repeatedly either made or implied in the pages of 'Mother India'."

"That point is :—

"The large majority of the inhabitants of British India is Hindu. The large majority of that majority adheres to the orthodox Hindu creed. To the influence or the dictates of the current orthodox Hindu creed are directly traceable the most devastating evils that to-day prey upon the Hindu world."

Many attempts have been made to controvert or dispute the reality of the picture presented by Miss Mayo; or to plead more or less apologetically that things are not so bad

as before, that under the influence of the reforming spirit fostered by contact with the West we are shedding fast the bad old relics of Hindu obscurantism and superstition. These attempts in fact do not assail the fundamental position taken up by Miss Mayo; to tell the truth, these reformers are practically in agreement with Miss Mayo's position. These men really are out of touch with the Hindu spirit, culture and civilisation; in fact, they despise it in their heart of hearts; they are thirsting and hungering for the new wine of the West.

The following pages have been written by me, a degenerate, unenlightened, poor Brahmin, not in the apologetic spirit—for I do not think there is anything to apologize for in the Hindu economy of society and view of the world. The evils to which Miss Mayo refers, and worse,—in so far as they exist—are really the outcome not of the orthodox Hindu creed, but of a fall from that creed. It was from the time that India became apostate from the burning faith and God-consciousness and God-realisation that marked the India of old that her evils and miseries began. And these evils can only end if India recovers her ancient ideals and lives her ancient culture again. Cheap,

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shoddy imitation of Western modes of life and thought cannot remove the social evils of India—for it is this shallow, soulless mimicry that is responsible for these.

That is the fundamental thesis for which these pages stand. And I venture to place them in the hands of those of my countrymen who have not been swept off their feet by this onrush of a thoughtless superficiality that is the bane of present-day India.

summit to be rid of the differences and distinctions below. To him who stands sufficiently high these littlenesses are not, but they are as real as the solid rock to those who grovel underneath. None can escape the mist unless he gets above it. Thou only taught this wisdom—the science and art of religion. Other ways, ask history, have caused everything of freedom to vanish except the crimes committed in her name, leading, as Wordsworth felt on the French soil during the Revolution, to

a voice

Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,
Death-like, of treacherous desertion, felt
In the last place of refuge—my own soul.

Thou didst promulgate the truth of truths /
that this world is no metaphorical but an
actual game, with twofold stakes ; those who
want happiness here and hereafter have only
to play the game, and play the man ; but those
who want to get at the secret of the game and
sight its author must cultivate a spirit of
absolute reverence and surrender and throw up
the dice. * * * *

My mother's picture ! Let it anger and
annoy whomsoever it may .

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I only curse that current's thwarting force
That sets me distant from thy time-honoured
course
My boast ne'er was that I deduced my birth
From loins enthroned or rulers of the earth.
But higher far my proud pretensions rise :
Slave of the gods that watch me from the skies.

Thy decried and desecrated picture, therefore,
has caused my traditional Kali to surge up in
me and thus admonish a proud world more
'possessed than possessing' :—

KALI

I am the mad, much-maligned, Hindu Goddess, Kali :
I at once show what I am, I never dilly-dally ;
The story of 'natural selection' I write on my person,
Its accurate, up-to-date, scientific version :
Civilization 'sticks its muzzle' in a deluge of gore,—
At a few drops in Kalighat it is tremendously sore :
The world has not yet forgot the last great shock,
Hence for the time being this goody-goody talk ;
Power has no humour, it is a camouflage or lie,
For man's real misery it has neither tear nor sigh ;
So I strike without mercy, for form is but froth,
In sheer void I delight for void is my cloth ;

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Naught was beginning, this form in the middle,
The end again naught—thus threads my needle ;
From naught I bring, back I send to naught,
My revolving sword-flash has this illusion wrought.
I am no decent, dainty, dressed-up, drawing room doll
To dust I have danced down many a bower and hall ;
I sport the skull necklace, I roll the highest head as ball
My lolling tongue shrieks out, 'I am the killer of all' ;
My weapon, lightning and thunder, the tempest I ride,
I am the Chandi that fights out demoniac pride,
I am no idol or symbol, I stand forth the fact ;
Where form flouts the spirit, I cancel that pact :
Once I sang through Orpheus 'Haro ! Haro ! Byom !'
And the Byom threw up brilliant Greece and Rome ;
Directly they sacrificed my end to their brass
The sands fast ran down in their hour glass ;
Socrates drank hemlock, Christ kissed the rod,
Civilization was once dazed into a vision of God ;
The stupor passed and it fell on matter back,
Dreamt democracies and empires on its beaten track ;
Love, law and right—my old, exploded Trinity
Has no longer any place in this mechanical Unity.
But things are not what the best brains wish them be
They have fallen out without fail only as willed by me :
Up and down, down and up, revolves my eternal
see-saw,
Till individuals and races outgrow the egoistic law :

KALI

The drunken mind then sobers, its functions then cease,
And the system recovers, its wonted normal ease ;
On that peace and patience, this dual dynamic play
The change of the changeless, inscrutable Maya as

they say ;

Preoccupied with matter they only magnify this ghost
Which lures them to the precipice with all their boast.
Ambition hates a handful of harmless herb and honey,
Churns my liquid breast for its only God, money ;
The poison spit my husband drinks, bluing his throat,
But it grudges me even partially its Egotism's goat ;
Nay, it denies me outright, to matter alone it nods,
And belittles my believers as slaves of the Gods.
But Proton the dream-stuff pointing to Pranab the
truth

The Vedas declared before science boomed her booth.
You might fly by the air or you might hie by the sea,
The Sphinx keeps on asking man "To be or not to be?"
Daily the secret of coming, slumming and going
Gets beyond and beyond the range of knowing.
The earth a tiny planet, the great sun a tiny star,
Even to know them fully would not take you very far.
By knowing my Lord alone you can know all that is
And stop this vulgar pettifogging about mine and his ;
But the dupe of the senses with the eye of desire
Sees me wielding only this sword and fire ;
To such I flare up fierce, stark-naked and wild.

KALI

I live on the high Himalayas, Mahadev my spouse,
At his bidding I play, this play of cat and mouse.
He is the one great Unity, the rest zero after zero,
Pricked by my sword-thrust, coward, cavalier or hero.
Time touches not me, and my understanding peoples—
The waves that others engulf are to them but ripples.
The secret of destiny in this bosom so black and bare.
Man mocks the eternal truth, let him once more beware.

For one thing alone I care, my devoted desireless child ;
I court his defiance to over-ride the conflagration I

light ;

The heir to the soul of my lord, I tremble at his might.

Shankar placed his life in a cruel Kapalik's hand,

I ran to his rescue for this ancient Rishis' land.

I once frightened my darling Ramprosad Sen ;

Quick he retorted 'I would eat you up then.'

Well up in my ways my child sees through my masks ;

"Who fears your reddened eye?" He defiantly asks.

The fierce-looking tigress dealing destruction to all

Let the cubs approach, how the wrath and rigor fall !

She then yields to Nature's touch and gladly gives

suck.

Love alone can tame all fury, love is, what they call,

luck,

Love brought me to Brindabon, beat my sword into a

flute ;

My form and Pranab I change that love they may suit.

Pained at my all-devouring and destructive sally,

Arjun prayed me into his coveted Krishna from Kali.

I turned Kali again with Radha kneeling at my feet,

When her husband was set to detect a trysting meet.

Radha, my sweeter self, the princess of the softer sex,

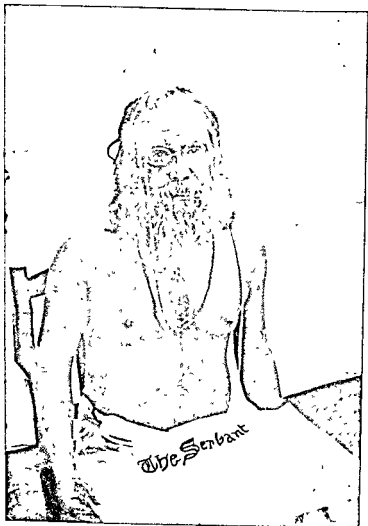
Wrapped up in her Flutist, the philosophers' X.

I enter the desireless as the river enters the sea ;

For proof I produce the figure of fulness beneath me.

KALI

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Pandit Syam Sunder Chakravarty

"Yes, what a fate of your sweetest songs in this Miss Mayo's second book on India—Slaves of the Gods" was the half-humorous reply.

"Let alone Miss Mayo, who is out to steal our reputation. But have *you* the ear for our own Indian song?"

"No, to tell the truth, it jars on our foreign-trained and Mayo-sensitized ears" was the frank confession of the sincere young man.

"Yes, that is 'the real problem of new India.' She exultingly flies the flag of cultural and moral dependence in the name of modernization."

"Yes, your oft-repeated phrase, 'the real problem of India' new-coming from an unexpected quarter" reminded Jogesh.

"Problem of India? How the phrase thrills me! How it puts in a nutshell the dream of a lifetime. What ails India? Where is she wanting? Representing as she does the whole of the world in climate, in physical features, in the delicacy and magnificence of her natural scenery, in the richness of her moral and mental resources, in the vastness and variety of her literature and thought, wisdom and experience, exploits and achievements how is it that today we stand before the seeming sepulchre, use all conjectural life-giving cries

but no Lazarus leaps out to life. Where is the mistake? Problem of India! The voice may be the voice of Miss Mayo but the hand is the hand of God. He it is who wants to tell us:—
 “I assigned you a labour; I placed in your charge a treasure which you have long kept tied in a napkin, but have neither used nor augmented to your or to other peoples’ benefit.

I have not only ceased giving power to your elbow as you have not done your duty, nay, forgotten your mission; but I have on the contrary beaten you to dust. I am no longer your God but either a lie or a shuttle-cock of controversy because you have forfeited your birth-right of realization. You do not perhaps remember, as you have thrown it all to the scrap-heap as superstitious Sibylline-books, that I once appeared before one of your oldest sages, since named Atri (not three) and fortified you with truth. He called me long with an earnestness, sincerity and wholeness of heart which I have long missed in you and I responded. I showed him what I am like in this world of form and phenomenon, the one appearing as three, exercising threefold capacity. He doubted me. He said that he did not want three, but prayed for one. But I reassured him that we in our

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knot of the heart is cut making you capable of the truest feeling; and this irresistible karmic wheel slows down of itself keeping you to ply it indifferently, no matter how it moves or where it leads.

*‘Vishnu sakti para proktha kshetragnashcha
tatha para Abidya karma sakti.’*

Why did I place this secret in your keeping, if you would only join this conspiracy to deny me altogether, to throw to the four winds my code and constitution and be a law unto yourself? You cannot complain of that want of chart and compass which has made navigation so difficult for others.

Your fathers that once trod the ways of
glory,
And sounded all the depths and shoals
of honour,
Found thee a way, out of all wreck, to
rise in;
A sure and safe one though the world
missed it.

You call your fathers fools and neglect your invaluable heritage. Should you complain that I frown upon you as grim-visaged *Rudra*, and close in on you with my net of destruction?

Did I not tell you how to avert this angry face of mine by walking my way? *'Rudra jasthe dakshinam mukhang, jat bhadrang tanna asubha.'*

I wished Atri to beg a boon of me—some tangible result of this memorable interview. He wanted a son as powerful as myself. And I blest him with Dattatreya, the father of the school of *tyagis*, who illustrated in his life that self-reverence, self-knowledge and self-control, these alone lead men to sovereign power. I also gave him my *mantra*, the one mighty and pregnant word, that holds within its simple fold all that was, is or shall be. But all this sacred knowledge is now moth-eaten, and slighted and discarded by you as pre-civilization superstition and ignorance. So far back as the days of Kurukshetra my mongoose went to Yudhisthir when I also was there, to warn him even then how he was imperceptibly falling from the ideals and to put him on his guard against the narrowness, egotism and the spirit of exploitation which though openly repudiated in his great anointing sacrifice impalpably coloured its proceedings. My mongoose was quite plain-spoken even to this great personage of the day and thus boldly addressed him:—

‘Oh, King! tempted by the far-flung report of your much-trumpeted sacrifice I have come all the way to Indraprastha to find for myself what this sacrifice was really like. Once I had witnessed a great sacrifice and got half of my fur turned into gold by rolling on its sacred ground. Inspired by that memory I thought to gild the other half by sprinkling on it the dust of your sacrificial site. But though I did the needful not a single bristle turned yellow. And the scene of the previous sacrifice was no royal court but the humblest home of a poor Bramhin in a period of severe famine. The Bramhin, his wife, son and young daughter-in-law formed this small family. For three days they went without any food. On the fourth they procured a little powdered wheat and distributed the same amongst themselves. Unexpectedly a famine-starveling turned up beating his straightened stomach. No sooner had the welcome guest made his appearance than the Bramhin rushed forth to do him *homage* with his share. It having fallen much short of his necessity, the anxious housewife watched the fallen face of her husband and hastened to place her portion at the disposal of the guest; that also having proved insufficient the son followed

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suit. The young daughter-in-law then began to weep, thinking that the guest would perhaps reject her service as she was a child bride. I hoped to see this spirit manifested on a colossal scale in this great sacrifice of yours. But I stand disillusioned.'

"I have sent messenger after messenger making the pictured page of your sagas radiant with lesson after lesson to keep you straight. Children of spirit as you are how often have you seen that even the mightiest machinations and manipulations of matter could not prevail against my single-minded boy votaries. The one thing that I stressed, emphasised, concentrated on by way of buoying up Arjun's sinking spirit was 'That you are not this body—that earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes is not your fate—that you are not circumscribed by this birth and death-wall, that you have as large a destiny as mine in spite of your local and temporary limitations.' I do not care whether you deny or affirm me but you were made to affirm yourself through my help against the manifold menace of my *Maya*. Even my *Maya* told you in so many words.—

"Jo nang jayathi sangrame

Jo me darpang bapohathi

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"Jo mang jayathi sangramo

Jo me darpang bapohathi

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Jo me protibalo loke
Sa me vartha bhabisathi."

He who will conquer me in war, he who will humble my pride, he who will prove my match in prowess shall he be my husband and lord.

You now stand petrified and paralysed at the gorgon look of science. Science is a good servant but a bad master.

You deny spirit so wise you grow. You are welcome to doubt. I also want every one to pass the great preliminary stage of doubt before seeking me. But have you kept the enquiry and experiment vigorously going? Science is veering round to my side and you are deserting it in the name of Science. Shirkers, deserters and waverers I do not prosper. Determine once again what you are to live, work and die for; or you are gone."

Jogesh asked here if India was ever a nationally-minded India.

"Yes, when she was strictly self-determined."

'The importance of the history of a country,' says Buckle, 'depends not upon the splendour of its exploits but upon the degree to which its actions are due to causes springing out of itself.' There was a time when the Hindus worked out their civilization 'entirely by'

themselves unhampered by alien influence, when the play and flow of the Hindu mind was like that of the Ganges in the days of her pristine purity and freedom, when the people's voice was the voice of the gods and determined even the private affairs of royalty. It was from the study of that period that the Orientalist opined "that Hindusthan is certainly the one country which for the longest period has possessed the greatest civilization," In fact the natives told Alexander the Great, when he appeared among them, that they had never been invaded before and some Bramhins refused to see him. Whatever this race achieved was at this time But after that the deluge—the sad story of the most original but arrested civilization. The cup of humiliation is now full to the brim. Our present activities are all imitative and derivative.

India does not believe in herself much less respect herself. Seeley, the philosopher-historian, found it long ago as the root of her trouble and not her alleged original sins. India, we were taught, is a geographical expression, as Metternich spoke of Austrian Italy. Its name, they found, made no heart throb, no eyes flash, no lips quiver, no frame tense with emotion. On

the contrary, by the favourite habit of fouling our own nest we helped the impression to grow and gather strength. A few decades ago, some of our best men combated this mere geographicality of India and tried to fill up its faded outline with flesh and blood and present it as the great historic figure that it really is. But self-distrust dies hard and a reaction has followed making once more a scarecrow of our beloved Mother. Miss Mayo only found that her time has come."

"Yes, that seems to be the correct reading of the situation. Though I am not at all for idolising India and want to see her painted as she is, yet I cannot help agreeing with you that we ourselves have made our self-respect shy and given the handle to all outside calumniators. See, here in this book, Miss Mayo claims that the effect of the cat has been remarkable. This is what she says in this connection in her new book :—'That the more glaring social evils inherent in Hinduism have, during the past eighteen months, increasingly engaged the attention and received the acknowledgment of educated India is indisputable. That this phenomenon is largely the effect of American and European public opinion suddenly

ing whose slings and arrows once visited Dickens' immortal 'Umble' Uriah Heep. Plainer still, many of them say in their heart of hearts 'amen' to much of what she has written." This was how Jogesh explained the adaptation of the allegory.

"Why? They have even been heard to whisper 'she has only laid the brush a little too thick'. Otherwise the picture is true to the life. Who will deny that its child wives, child widows and untouchables have made our country the accursed hole abhorred both of God and men? Caste and Swaraj go ill together—that is the new political philosophy. So, though away from the city, I am not behind-hand in information, Jogesh."

Jogesh hastened to correct me. "They no longer whisper like cowards. Down with caste, down with the Hindu Society is now their open war-cry. The Congress and the Conference platforms which once religiously eschewed controversial social questions now resound with the cry :

Mad of its history
Sick of its mystery
Ready to be hurled
Any where, any where
Out of the (Hindu) world".

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shortest facts and ready clinical notes. In short, I am willing to offer myself to assist her to rewrite the book. If it is done, it will win all the reformers to her side without further delay. I set forth to outline the new edition." (Page 86-87)

"It is not easy to find out the cause of our preference for otherworldliness and the Via Mystica. Instead of getting lost in the unfathomable abysses of research into the origin of the Hindu's devotion to mysticism, we shall inform him that though God likes man to choose the better part, the way of Mary, it will be better for the Hindu race to take up the way of Martha for a while. If the Indians want to be respected by the self-governing nations of the world they should give up the Via Mystica and set their feet firmly on the path of Modern Science. I think this idea presented with extreme graciousness and abundant humour, without invectives, will not fail to convince all India. Once the Hindus see eye to eye with Miss Mayo it will be easy for her to persuade them and the British Government to pass a law making excessive concentration on religion on the part of any individual a real crime." (Page 83-85)

"Self-respect buying off barbarism like Rome in her last days!"

"But I think you are also striking nearer home. Do you not mean that these neo-politicians, after having held a Town Hall protest meeting against what they call her unwarranted generalisations, have lapsed into that fit of terrible self-reproach and self-search-

ing whose slings and arrows once visited Dickens' immortal 'Umble' Uriah Heep. Plainer still, many of them say in their heart of hearts 'amen' to much of what she has written." This was how Jogesh explained the adaptation of the allegory.

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"And you are perhaps bursting your sides with joy, Jogesh. Your new Heaven and your new Earth is on the fair way to realisation. But many of them were not in Europe, for seventeen long years, like yourself. You need a more revolutionary programme. Can't you propose the scuttling of the whole country into the Ganges with the exception of the western educated elect?"

"You need not be anxious. Who knows what this new book will achieve? These illustrious Europeans are now coming to our rescue. 'Mother India' was the best seller in the Western book market. Have you heard that?"

"Yes, I know that she dipped a paste board in a cask of jet, called it 'Mother India' and put it on the book stall. The whole of the West came trooping at her heels and clapped their hands. I can give you an additional information. She would have been voted a right royal statue at Geneva as the genius who has at last cut the Gordian knot of India's problem but for Alexander's well-known reverence for the motherhood of the world against whom he would have hardly stood any nonsense.

What new ground has she covered in this new book?"

"No, 'Mother India' can not be improved upon. It is like the *Taj* its own parallel. She has only painted the lily and gilded gold. She has this time only 'cast her facts into fiction form," laughed out Jogesh.

"But her truths themselves are stranger than fiction."

"Are we then not to mend our ways for fear of what a Mrs. Grundy will say?" interrupted Jogesh with his acquired accents.

"But is it necessary even for artificial reforms that you should expose yourself to the grimacing and gesticulating gallery? In our normal healthy life we take in and throw out every day without collecting a crowd around to recommend and induce the process. Where there is life it functions easily and silently. The main question is to bring life to the Hindu society by reviving its spiritual and moral intuition. Tulsidas, the arch self-accuser when closeted with his God, sternly prohibited the bawling out of human weaknesses in the market place as that loses both self-respect and sympathisers. When asked to accuse and judge, scribble on the ground, but when the crowd has melted away whisper 'Go and sin not' with such a pain in the heart and appeal in the eye

that you have made an enduring conquest. This is the true secret of reform left by one than whom few men had greater love for his fellowmen. By irritating prejudice and killing self-respect you only make reforms impossible."

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. No more of this painful Mayo business on this beautiful evening. How do you like my house? Does it not suit you? I knew that you would like it" said Jogesh with the sweetest of accents as he does whenever the generous impulse rises in his heart.

"Like it?—that is not the word. You have found me a home. It is such a lovely little place, so unlike the howling leafy wildernesses designed for protection against the ignoble cares and strifes of city life. Modern art and science pursue their prey wherever he goes and ply him with their gay pageantry. The indefinable charm of your house is its simplicity. Unaffected by the aristocratic air of the neighbouring villas, bowers and cottages, it nestles in a bare grassy setting blest mainly by the mother Ganges who meanders by. A yellow emblem of peace and sweetness—this house of yours. A typical Hindu home. To me sometimes the very image of the goddess Durga looking out upon the shrinking,

steamer-swept Ganges and exchanging many a sad, significant glance. This short flight of stairs leading to the yet much-revered river by which I frequently sit watching and wondering—my favourite haunt. Once I stretched my whole length across its diligently dusted steps—a passive recipient of the never-failing inspiration of the glorious associations. Before, the waving watery expanse of immemorial sanctity; behind, the sacred scene of divine love and lore ensconced in a *tulsi* shrubbery, Sri Chaitanya having had here his historic dance and trance with a God-intoxicated scholar of the holy *Bhagbat*; to the right, the humming local bathing ghat with its never-ceasing flow of female bathers and overlooked by a plain Baisnab temple; to the left, the fresh layer of light green turf bordering the grey sari of the Ganges and witnessing the grazing of listless cattle, and last though not least the hallowed zone where Ramkrishna cultivated afresh the old spiritual alchemy and made a reconquest of proud western-educated intellectualism. The old beloved Hindu India in miniature. Just the place to conceive 'that constructive desire really to understand India's problem' which Miss Mayo alone claims to have done in her distinguished isolation.'

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"Go on with your description of this place, it is so interesting" was the eager request of Jogesh.

"The sunny obtrusiveness of the day was fast dying into the soft witchery of the purple-tinted eve. The crimson orb of the setting sun just sank behind the serried phalanx of a long array of tree tops; the western sky gleamed rosy and gold, lifting the whole scenery much above the present-day level of riparian beauty. They talk of the slaves of the gods? I make the confession that I am one of them. Actually I then addressed the rain-bow horizon to the west after Campbell :—

Still seem as to my childhood's sight
A midway station given ;
For happy spirits to alight
Betwixt earth and heaven.

In the soft intoxication of the moment I cast my eyes to the right and the bathing ghat held for me the most pleasant surprise of the evening. Girl-wives and young widows gliding down the steps—inimitable models of feminine grace and modesty. None of the cudgelled caged birds—the pathetic metaphor of the humane reformer."

"You are visibly affected", murmured Jogesh.

"Stop here or gently pass ! The sight quickens a world of blessed memory. Deep calls unto deep. Hindu housewives, occasionally escaping the domestic cares and bending their steps to the riverside, pitchers against their waists, hearts throbbing, heaving and bursting, eyes roving hither and thither unconsciously in search of the Lord with the flute, the traditional frequenter of the riverside. What a suggestive picture, Jogesh ? I am tempted to indulge in a little comparison. Is my mother here the figure of coldness with which a Diana repels ; the beauty and sensuality with which a Venus tempts ; the pride in the eye and defiance on the brow with which a Juno offends ; the artificial accomplishments a Minerva flaunts in the face ? I have a suspicion that the Greek goddesses hardly sighted that Vishnu whose great feet our gods are said to witness every hour of their lives. Look here—the young mothers are walking the downward slope to the river like mobile and fluid love, with that silent searching and self-forgetting which apprehends its Maker by an inalienable birth-right where puffed up self-consciousness and self-sufficiency

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returns with oaths, curses and cold negations in its mouth. They are the women of India who know and serve their gods by the urge of an instinct. Sex, I now feel, means to them sloping down to the gods as it is now sloping down to the Ganges.

But, Jogesh, why are you so much against this idea and reality of home which is every thing to a Hindu? The Englishmen out here whom you take as your model in every thing seem to be in desperate love with all that the word home stands for. They warmly speak of going Home. They anxiously look forward to the "Home mail" every Sunday. They write letters Home every Thursday and do not stand any disturbance on that day. Some of the Anglicised Indians also make a point of starting Home just as the long holidays begin. In our school days we remember to have read English poems in praise of Sweet Home. A few lines I still remember though my present age is nearly sixty.

'Midst pleasures and palaces though we may roam
Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home
An exile from home, splendour dazzles in vain
Oh give me my lowly thatched cottage again

The birds singing gaily that come at my call
 Oh give me these and my peace of mind dearer than
 all.

An exile from home three times in life, how keenly I felt the force of these lines."

"But that home is not your fly, frog or mosquito-infested home. And you cannot apply this word home to the 'world's chief reservoir of infection', to use the well-meaning Mayo phrase" was the Mayo-inspired logic of Jogesh.

"But the infection of infections is the corrupt heart and all-round irreverence—the two great blessings of the Mayo-civilization. I have known beautiful 'straw village' homes, each one a model of cleanliness, the women of the home having ever been on the alert to keep out every form of dirt. The mothers would get up in the small hours of the morning, brooms in hand, do the scrubbing, sweeping, sprinkling and cleaning for nearly a couple of hours and the family then woke up to find that their home was literally laughing with an inward sense of purity. Uncleanly habits are no doubt now in evidence in most places. But the real reason is that godliness which went hand in hand with the old-day cleanliness is ceasing to be that constant disin-

perceive the slightest eruption upon the skin, or any marks that an eruption had left behind.'

That civilisation has now favoured the uncivilised with its boon and either corrupted them or killed them is a commonplace of the tour-literature of all the wellknown European visitors of the so-called savage countries. But even in England of Science and Sanitation, Knowledge and Wealth disease stalked the land and doctors were the masters of the situation when civilisation was in full swing. Edward Carpenter's book on civilisation which has run through sixteen editions thus speaks of the disease-breeding and disease-carrying quality of civilisation so far as its operation on England was concerned :—

'Probably there has never been an age, nor any country (except Yankee-land ?) in which disease has been so generally prevalent as in England today ; and certainly there has never (with the same exception) been an age or country in which doctors have so swarmed, or in which medical science has been so powerful, in apparatus in learning, in authority, and in actual organisation and number of adherents. How reconcile this contradiction—if indeed a contradiction it be ?'

This book was first published in 1889, the heyday of science and civilisation. James Watt, the great improver of the steam engine died on August 25,

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1819 in his eightyfourth year. So the condition of England referred to above, supervened after improved steam engine, the harbinger of civilisation, had increased human comforts, and enjoyments and rendered cheap and accessible, all over the world, the materials of health, wealth and prosperity for nearly hundred years. After being thus served by civilisation one can understand Whitman when he exclaimed :—'The friendly and flowing savage, who is he? Is he waiting for civilisation, or is he past it, and mastering it?'

Take this civilisation Jogesh, and give us back our own home. The wearer alone knows where the shoe pinches. The time has certainly come to assess the contribution of the adjuncts of civilisation to man's misery. It is an old story that malaria is the gift of Railway. With the advent of the mills there have not only come the septic tanks and this horrible pollution of the water of the Ganges as I have been witnessing with my own eyes to my great distress during my stay in your house, but the morals of Labour have suffered the most. Thousands of men and women huddled together in badly built barracks have become utter strangers to the healthy influence of home. The

mill-whistle for calling them to work is heard, when it is yet night, and men and women have to hurry up without even washing and easing themselves to their satisfaction. Then they remain cooped and cabined plying their hands and fingers to the music of the machine and getting very little opportunity to come into healthy contact with Nature. A large number of the mill operatives are Hindus but I never saw an appreciable number bathing in the Ganges even on great festival days. I tried for a month to get some of them join my *Hari sankirtan* party and approached the sardar, the Babu, the head overseer and whom not for the purpose. I was put off for a time with this or that excuse but was ultimately told that the fatigued bones of the coolies cry for the relief of drink and dissipation during their off days and they have no time for the luxury of religion or things of that sort. The mean surroundings of your house to which I have alluded at the very beginning of the chapter are also said to have been brought into existence by the requirement of the over-worked coolies. Small wonder that with puffing, yelling, belching, whistling both on the bosom of the river as on the scene of their

own activity they look upon life as a tale told by an idiot of which most must be made by their particular form of relaxation and recreation. When I compare these men with the village peasants and artisans I knew in my village days, I cannot help crying out 'from what height to what depth fallen!' These people have also come to regard money as the be-all and end-all of life and do not care for health, leisure, innocent amusement not to speak of devotional exercises. But I must tell you one thing, you who want to banish religion from the land, that with all these corrupting forces at work the Uriyas could not be totally corrupted as the inspiration from Juggarnath always protects them when they have to come afield for their living. The Uriya employees of the mills feel a great blank in their lives, unless they can create opportunities to chant the holy name."

"But modern political economy cannot fit in with your mediaeval emotions," was the impatient criticism by Jogesh, of what I so feelingly urged.

"Then have a fill of your gunpowder, steam and electricity and you have also done with the man. If it is a money-making age, then make money and give up the man. Why this monstrous

hypocrisy of a 'Mother India'? You have neither mother nor sister nor brother nor friend but money as the only object of consideration. Why these crocodile tears? The two cannot go together. You cannot eat your cake and have it too. And this money ideal is working the greatest mischief amongst the once idealistic Indian people because idealism knows no half-way house and when they accept a new god they altogether turn their back on the old. They are putting their old customs and institutions also to the service of the new ideal of pleasure and pecuniary gain and no tinkering reform of social customs can meet the situation. We require the constructive help of our religion to bring back our home, our village and last though not least the Race-Spirit.

"What is this Race-Spirit on which you harp so much?" asked Jogesh with real inquisitiveness.

"This is the burden of my song. Unless you can get India back to her old ideal of living religion and acting religion, she can neither rise herself nor raise others. In Europe religion might have been something like an ornamental article. And this solves Buckle's puzzle that a superstition-free France could be Catholic Christian in faith and a superstitious Scotland could

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swear by Protestantism. When religion is something like a holiday garb and need not influence conduct its true character does not at all matter to its so-called adherents. In other countries other activities mainly occupied the people and religion was not so much a matter of experience and realisation as to be the inspirer and regulator of hour to hour work. In India religious truths admittedly came from men who were qualified to receive them by their exceptional character and conduct. So these truths had their binding influence on the whole body of the people who unhesitatingly surrendered themselves to the dictates of their scriptures in the matter of determining their duty. That God is and our potential yearning for Him will in its own good time be our master passion and swallow all minor attractions is a belief that has entered the very constitution of the Indian mind, though temporarily astray, and if we are to get the very best out of this mind we must press this religious button. This common yearning which matures with every Hindu of the right type when his time comes affords a more convincing proof of the existence of God than what has been attempted by logic or philosophy.

India's business is to quicken and keep alive the sense of God in man. If God is a myth, if spirit is an unreality because it cannot be seen with the eyes, then Othello's occupation is gone. It then matters little whether she lives, or dies still less whether she is bound or free.

The battle of Kurukshetra was a terrible battle. All the days it was fought it was an affair of unflagging interest merely and exclusively as a battle. The illustrious men on each side, the peculiar reasons for which some of them had to take sides, the tactics, the formations, the variety of weapons, the wonderful death-dealing capacity of every fresh type of weapon, the stirring episodes, the unequal encounters, the youthful heroisms, the daily deepening of the combat, the sublime fall of some of the heroes—and last though not least the ubiquitous part which Sri Krishna himself had to play in all the difficult situations—all these have their inexhaustible interest. They have furnished the materials of an immortal epic. They are all in their place there.

But has not one single event eclipsed them all? People may forget even the main occurrence. But they will never forget what may be called a mere side issue. Has there

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been a more conspicuous case in the history of the world of withholding from Caesar what is due to Caesar and giving it all to God? The art of warfare as displayed in that memorable battle, the conduct, prowess and end of the combatants, nay even its far-reaching effect on the fate of the country—these things may concern a few experts, specialists and do not form such an essential part of the race-memory or consciousness as the sermon on the chariot-box. And what was said here? Things that give a headache to the practical man of affairs—things that stink in the nostrils of a scientist, things that will not go down with those who do not care for anything that does not forcibly appeal to their external senses. But yet the Gita is an acknowledged heirloom of inestimable value. Even the most revolutionary reformer swears by it. That it was uttered when modern science was not, does not put it out of court. It is quoted, and requested to support reforms and innovations intended for the denial and deposition of that very God who uttered it and whose domination is held to be far more obnoxious than the naked Imperialisms of the day. This is how the Race-Spirit works. India has to be religious, as the sun has to shine, the

eagle has to fly and the nightingale has to sing. The greatest battle of the earliest times was fought when India was in the greatest blaze of material glory to give the world its greatest classic on the duty of man. Archemedes might have been killed by a soldier while drawing his geometrical figure on the sands. But he was only a better fighter for his physics and geometry. With Socrates and Plato too fighting and philosophy went hand in hand. India got her geometry, her astronomy, her literature through religion. And her complete salvation means an unceasing spiritual activity. What a foolish and blockheaded cry—this India being in danger through her religion! We are all listening to it and shouting Bravo!

The Bramhinic Race-spirit which, according to thoughtful historians, is the germ of Hindu nationalism in India, has in it something like the continuous virility of the biological germ plasm, and even in later times, amidst uncongenial surroundings, completely submerged the Buddhist culture and still more recently burst forth in the intellectual renaissance of Nabadwip, Bikrampur and similar historic seats of learning in other provinces. The few Hindu intellectual prodigies of the British period whose

achievements have extorted the admiration of European savants are also undoubtedly the products of this tenacious Race-spirit of Hindu India. Small wonder that Professor De Morgan of mathematical fame pleaded hard for the restoration of this native mind through native efforts.

We have almost destroyed India's finer faculties and are addressing her grosser faculties through lampblack and lightning, as Ruskin so expressively put it, and complaining of no response. Lampblack and lightning might do, as it is certainly doing, for other countries but in India it will fail of its effect on a nature which has been traditionally tuned to its God. By their trying to force it into a mould not meant for it, it is cracking everywhere and producing this all-pervading, vulgar and discordant noise. When Europe felt the necessity of going exclusively to lampblack and lightning, it was not because she was not alive to the limitations of even the strongest reason but because she was not then ripe for that transcendental process which alone can ascertain the religious truths and place them in due supremacy over all other truths. The following quotation from Buckle's History will clear our meaning :—

‘If the ultimate test of truth is individual judgment, and if no one can affirm that the judgments of men, which are often contradictory, can ever be infallible it follows of necessity that there is no decisive criterion of religious truth. This is a melancholy, and, as I firmly believe, a most inaccurate conclusion, but it is one which every nation entertains, before it can achieve that great work of toleration, which, even in our own country, and in our own time, is not yet consummated. It is necessary that men should learn to doubt before they begin to tolerate; and that they should recognise the fallibility of their own opinions, before they respect the opinion of their opponents. This great process is far from being yet completed in any country; and the European mind, barely emerged from its early credulity, and from an overweening confidence in its own belief, is still in a middle and, so to say, probationary stage. *When that stage shall be finally passed, when we shall have learned to estimate men solely by their character and their acts, and not at all by their theological dogmas we shall then be able to form our religious opinions by that purely transcendental process, of which in every age glimpses have been granted to a few gifted minds.* That this is the direction in which things are now hastening, must be clear to every one, who has studied the progress of modern civilisation. Within the short space of three centuries, theological spirit has been compelled, not only to descend from its long-established supremacy but to abandon those strongholds to which, in the face of advancing knowledge, it has vainly attempted to secure a retreat. All its most cherished pretensions it has been forced gradually to relinquish. And although in England a temporary prominence has recently been given to certain religious controversies still the circumstances attending

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them show the alteration in character of the age. Disputes which, a century ago, would have set the whole kingdom on a flame, are now regarded with indifference by the vast majority of educated men. The complications of modern society, and the immense variety of interests into which it is divided, have done much to distract the intellect, and to prevent it from dwelling upon subjects which a less-occupied people, would deem of paramount importance. Besides this, the accumulations of science are far superior to those of any former age, and offer suggestions of such surpassing interest, that nearly all our greatest thinkers devote to them the whole of their time, and refuse to busy themselves with matters of mere speculative belief. The consequence is, that what used to be considered the most important of all questions, is now abandoned to inferior men, who mimic the zeal, without possessing the influence of those really great divines whose works are among the glories of our early literature. These turbulent polemics have, indeed, distracted the church by their clamour, but they have not made the slightest impression upon the great body of English intellect; and an overwhelming majority of the nation is notoriously opposed to that monastic and ascetic religion which it is now vainly attempted to reconstruct. The truth is, that the time for these things has gone by. Theological interests have long ceased to be supreme; and affairs of nations are no longer regulated according to ecclesiastical views. In England, where the march has been more rapid than elsewhere, these changes are very observable. In every other department we have had a series of great and powerful thinkers, who have won the admiration of mankind. But for more than a century we have not produced a single original work in the whole field

of controversial theology. For more than a century the apathy on this subject has been so marked, that there has been made no addition of value to that immense mass of divinity which, among thinking men, is in every successive generation losing something of its former interest.'

I have made this long extract because it gives so exhaustively the arguments of the no-religion school and that through its earliest, acutest and best informed exponent. But still Buckle is not a no-religionist. What troubled him was the destruction of the spirit of doubt, scepticism and inquiry as also of toleration brought about by the ultra-credulousness and blind allegiance to theology and ecclesiasticism of the pre-seventeenth century Europe. The *odium theologicum* also got, to a certain extent, on his nerves. But he makes here one admission which we have put above in italics which shows that his heart also was in the right place, that he recognised the supreme importance of religious truths and only regretted that the religious opinions prevalent at the time could not command the credence of reasonable men because they proceeded from quarters that were not in a position to advance the least pretension to a pure transcendental process. Now, these objections and difficulties hardly apply to India where belief was never

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speculative and hence little open to question. India has been the cradle, care-taker and custodian of this transcendental process of ascertaining religious truths. Its whole social system was designed to preserve the purity of the transcendental process of discovering religious truths. Hence the charge of its sometimes erring on the side of harshness and rigidity. Pure transcendental process! Yet there is nothing transcendental about it in India. It is no self-exceeding but self-focussing. There is nothing in it above man's experience, so far as India is concerned. So don't you cast ridicule on it as words, words, words. It is only a philosophic and Kantian way of saying:—'The pure in heart see God'. And when is a thing pure? When it lets in nothing foreign to itself. Hence the touched needle of the genius in religion knows only one pole and turns to it. Everyone and everything that does not feel this magnetic field of force is foreign to him. He knows only one direction, one attraction, and one compulsion. Simply hold yourself Godward, emptying yourself of yourself, and be done with it all. Go out of yourself and let the vacuum be filled by God. It was the simplest experiment in India

for a special order of people. It is the sun-flower turning to the sun, and the rest taking care of itself. It is making up your mind to the Objective and screwing the whole system to the sticking point. It will then raise your intellect from a table-spoon or kitchen-ladle to the self-luminous organ of right knowing, right feeling, right willing and right thinking. Unless he knows God, and lives in His truth, the Bramhin has no intelligence, no clear intellect. That is what the Upanishads say and the Gita confirms. By knowing Him only, the wise Bramhin gets himself intelligence. (Brihadaranyak 4. 4. 21.)

The one who, himself without colour, by the manifold
application of his power,
Distributes many colours in his hidden purpose,
And into whom, its end and its beginning, the whole
world dissolves—He is God!

May He endow us with clear intellect,

(Svetasvatara Upanishada 4).

It is the inspired intellect alone that has the compelling tongue of the still, small voice, the Swatiki Buddhi of the Gita. Till then it is a voice in the wilderness. Unless you turn exclusively Godward, and lay yourself open to

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that mightiest of attractions all duty is a laborious task, mere weariness of the flesh and has no pleasure in it. *Rasaborjang of the Gita*. But once you have tasted, even by an accident, that inexhaustible and ever-growing sweetness, Napoleon then must hurl himself on his fate. The moth must then fling itself on the flame. Hanuman must then write in fire his Rama in the very recess of his heart. Tulsidas must then make once for all his surrender to the Archer Warrior—the thought of his day and the dream of his night. Mirabai must then brave the bullies of her husband's house and keep loyal to her Nandalal against enormous odds. Nanak must then waste his father's money on the business of obeying his God. Tukaram must then give away his sugarcane, get beaten by his wife and tell his bead. Narshi must then be chastised by his brother's wife, till his God comes to his rescue. Buddha must then pass his ordeal of self-mortification till he is enlightened. Chaitanya must then break up his *tol*, leave his aged mother and young wife and run God-intoxicated to Purushottam. Rupsanatans must then give up the ministership of the Nawab, get imprisoned and afterwards ransomed through Sri Chaitanya's

call. Dayanand after watching the poor plight of his father's rat-insulted Siva must start his research for the vedic God. And last though not least Shankar must then coax, cajole or threaten the poorest of mothers to get permission for *sannyas*. How many cases are there of doing it all by stealth, evading even the all-pervading ear of folklore. That is the story of this transcendentalism in India. Every blade of grass bristles with it. Every mountain cave bears the witness. Every jungle affords its refuge to this transcendentalism as to the birds and beasts. Whatever might be said of the claim that India's religious truths are not vitiated by any human origin it cannot be gainsaid that they were the outcome of an ample and unerring intuition developed by men whose character and conduct was the natural issue of communion with Truth. And when they had the least ground of suspicion that they had fallen from that high eminence they never arrogated to themselves the role of an original religious thinker. Sri Krishna himself when pressed by Arjun to repeat to him for the second time the precious doctrines of the Gita had no hesitation in confessing that he was no longer endowed with that intuition.

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These men appear to have lived in the very native land of spirit, to use Hegel's pregnant expression. They believed because they saw. Faith was not for them a self-complacent mental lethargy afraid of being disturbed in its snug security by the intrusion of the impertinent enquiring spirit. Nay, the very first aphorism of Bramhasutra warns off with a significant wave of hand those who have not already sown their wild oats in the realm of all earthly enquiries. Basistha in bringing it home to Ram that this world is of the stuff of which dreams are made did not set up any higher tribunal than reason and commonsense. It was in this connection that he uttered his famous compliment to human reason.—*Jukti jukta mupadeyang bachanang balakadapi*—salutary indeed is the voice even of a boy if wedded to reason. The exacting standard of their self-accusation and self-examination lends more than a plausibility to the claim that all that they said about the Great First Cause least understood was the result of direct knowledge and experience. Basistha must have felt that his son had fallen from the Bramhmic certitude of the highest effectiveness of a single-time remembrance of God's name for being

forgiven even the deadliest sins when he cursed his son to be reborn into the lowest caste for advising Dasaratha to take the holy name three times in expiation of the terrible sin of killing a blind saint's son. It is not necessary to believe these stories as recording some actual occurrence to support our suggestion that it was by their ceaseless efforts to be poised on the summit of the Everest and Kanchanjaunga of character that they kept themselves in the proper attitude of receptivity towards religious truth. Prahlad was asked by his father how it was that fire did not burn him, water did not drown him, poison did not kill him, elephant did not trample him to death and so on and so forth. Further, his father wanted to know the magic word or *mantra* which thus gave him a power against all the murderous agents of the world. The naive simplicity and total want of self-consciousness with which he answered his father and pointed to the perfect naturalness of the phenomenon is so striking that one may be excused the belief that the reply only embodied his simple experience. 'Father,' he said, 'it is neither *mantra*-produced nor anything particular in my case. Everyone of those in whose heart there lives the Great Unfallen enjoys this

commonest privilege. He who does not think ill of others as he does not think ill of himself cannot be the target of any pain in that the natural law of cause and effect does not operate in his case. He who causes others pain by deed, thought or word gives rise to many evil fruits grown from that seed of evil-wishing. I think of that omnipresent principle who exists in me as also in other forms of life and never wish ill to anyone either in action or in word. As I am well-disposed, well-meaning towards all, wherever my lot might be cast, wherefrom will come to me that mental or bodily pain which is caused by worldly and extra-worldly agents? It becomes every wise man to be steadfastly devoted to all beings as Hari happens to be the indwelling soul of all.' Now, do not these truths have that genuine ring which those obtained from strenuous laboratory labours are said to possess? And what is more, are not these truths far more precious and useful heirlooms to the progeny than those on which Buckle has expended his eloquence? How even our best intellects are apt to be dimmed and distracted by lampblack and lightning will appear from the following apotheosis of intellectual acquisitions.

Pralhad had told his father, when asked how he could frustrate the powers of nature? We also have our appreciation of those geniuses whose discoveries in the domain of matter Buckle has eulogised. But what are these discoveries in comparison with the discovery that it is possible to cultivate such catholic wholeness, such identity with all that was, is or shall be that the prospect of plunging into the limitless ocean of knowledge instead of counting pebbles on its shores comes within the range of probability provided one is prepared to pay the price? Science has been there with her mighty, magnificent and much-vaunted discoveries but yet Browning's *Paracelsus* made his famous death-bed confession :—'man is not Man as yet, nay, there has not yet begun man's general infancy'. Is man going to be man through an extended trial of lampblack and lightning?

Religions and creeds may deserve the contempt with which they have been spoken of if they are the results of the ordinary intellectual efforts of men ; for the limitations of the intellect are undeniable and its conclusions on matters unseen are no doubt open to doubt. But the seers of India laboured life after life to get that right sort of intellect which at once

glances from earth to heaven and heaven to earth. The monastic and ascetic religion to which also a derisive reference has been made may come in for such strictures, when it submits to cold conventions, restrictions and mortifications without any original or communicated God-consciousness within, but there is an exalted sort of asceticism which does not proceed from the spirit of cynical exclusiveness or the spirit of the routine but which is the logical consequence of an enthusiastic if not ecstatic devotion to truth without which nothing worth achieving has ever been achieved. We must throw ourselves upon ourselves and be free from all external disturbances including those inseparable from worldliness, if we are to do anything great. The poet in singing the praise of adversity perhaps anticipated this cheap sneer against all asceticism which, though to the common eye appearing as ugly and venomous, wears yet this precious jewel in its head—that this our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

in stones; that they discovered a soul in the wind of heaven, in the luminous sun and moon, in fire and water and long anticipated the scientist who now thinks :—

' Without the assumption of an atomic soul the commonest and the most general phenomena of chemistry are inexplicable. Pleasure and pain, desire and aversion, attraction and repulsion must be common to all atoms of an aggregate; for the movements of atoms which must take place in the formation and dissolution of a chemical compound can be explained only by attributing to them Sensation and will' *Haeckel in the Perigenesis of the Plastidule cited in Martinet's Types of Ethical Theory, Vol. II P. 399, 3rd edition.* Haeckel himself explains this statement as follows :— 'I explicitly stated that I conceived the elementary psychic qualities of sensation and will which may be attributed to atoms, to be unconscious—just as unconscious as the elementary memory, which I in common with the distinguished psychologist Ewald Hering consider to be a common function of all Organised matter, or more correctly the living substances'—*The Riddle of the Universe, Chap. IX P. 63 (R.P.A. Chap. Ed.)*

The Hindu position is that without knowing God for which object, of course, different prescriptions have been made for different orders of will and temperament you cannot get the all-perceiving intelligence. For this consummation the above "transcendental process" is called for and those who become really anxious for a re-

sort to this process are enabled to do so in course of time. Keep open the bridal chamber, wait and watch, taper in hand, and He will appear of himself and reveal His body as He has promised in the Upanishad (*Jangesha brinute*). Without this inspired intellect there is no other means of getting at the fundamental secret of Nature. Science is now hoist with her own petard. Mr. A. S. Eddington, the Cambridge University Professor of Astronomy and a shining light of the scientific world of the day in his Gifford Lectures on the Nature of the Physical world thus speaks of the poor achievements of the powerful intellect of which the scientist boasts. :—

“Nowadays whenever enthusiasts meet together to discuss theoretical physics the talk sooner or later turns in a certain direction. You leave them conversing on the special problems or the latest discoveries ; but return after an hour and it is any odds that they will have reached an all-engrossing topic—the desperate state of their ignorance. This is not a pose. It is not even scientific modesty, because the attitude is often one of naive surprise that Nature should have hidden her fundamental secret successfully from such powerful intellects as ours. It is simply that we have turned a corner in the path of progress and our ignorance stands revealed before us, appalling and insistent. There is something radically wrong with the present fundamental conceptions of physics and we donot see how to set it right.”

So there is something radically wrong in the present fundamental conceptions of Physics ! What a commentary on Buckle's passionate panegyric on Science ! We need not, however, bank on this confession in urging the claims of religion on the attention of the people of India. India, even in her degenerate days, has produced men who either possessed or acquired the knowledge of the pure transcendental process of perceiving religious truths. Every province of India can put to its credit a number of holy men who brought about quite a revolution in their sceptical surroundings by living a life in tune with the Infinite. Swami Vivekananda while replying to the address presented to him on behalf of Hindu Calcutta, after his American triumph, in the historic quadrangle of Raja Radha Kanta Dev of pious memory spoke of his guru that he could take a handful of dust from the street and breathe life and fire into it. These saints gave themselves no airs, chose to be away from men and had a child-like frankness so far as their religious experiences were concerned. Now they felt the Mother was, now they felt she was not, now they were on the crest of a wave of joy, now they were terribly depressed and distressed and thus ran the whole

gamut from the excruciating pang of separation to the highest bliss of reunion. Ramprosad, the well-known Kali-saint of Bengal, who, it is said, was at times blessed even with personal service from the Mother at other times felt so sure of her non-existence that he had little hesitation in singing :—

“Mind, stop calling ‘Mother, Mother !’
 Don’t you know ‘She is dead ?’—
 Else why should She not come ?
 I am going to the banks of the Ganges,
 To burn the grass image of my Mother,
 And then I’ll go and live in Benares.”

The magnetic personality which Ramprosad developed attracted the attention even of a man like Sirajahdowla, the young Mahomedan Governor of Bengal, who with all his alleged predilection for pleasure was at times capable of excellent detachment. He once brought him to his pleasureboat and asked him to sing him the songs of his Mother. Such was Tukaram who also had his chequered experience hovering between depression and ecstasy. It was Sri Chaitanya who passed through the largest variety of experience entailing corresponding transformations of the body and sometimes perilous plunges into the blue river mistaking

it for the body of Krishna. While thus immersed in their frequent and profound self-communings, they had, every one of them, their clear, emphatic and thoroughly lived doctrines about God-head. Darwin while standing in the midst of the grandeur of a Brazilian forest happened to be overwhelmed by the higher feelings of wonder, admiration and devotion which fill and elevate the mind and came to entertain the conviction that there is more in man than the mere breath of his body. But subsequently even the grandest natural scenery left him unmoved. He said, he would have regarded this loss of perception of his as something like colourblindness proving the existence of God if all men of all races had the same inward conviction about the existence of this one God. What a logical demand from the father of the theory of evolution ! According to Goethe the one thing which no child brings with him into this world is reverence. Nay, 'man does not willingly submit himself to reverence or rather he never so submits himself : *it is a higher sense which must be communicated to his nature ; which only in some favoured individuals unfolds itself spontaneously, who on this account too have of old, been looked upon as Saints and Gods.*' And Darwin

wants this reverence in all men of all races ! Is not then the fact that India has all along in her age-long history produced these favoured individuals, through good report and evil, a proof positive of the existence of God and of India's special mission to find out and proclaim Him to the world ? It is preeminently a land of the Saints and the gradual alienation of the people of India from the influence of these Saints has been her undoing and not her so-called religiosity which even in the most orthodox ranks is more concerned with bankbalance and official favour than with God. If anybody discover religiosity in present-day India it is in most cases that lampblack and lightning-blinded religiosity, which has played even a Darwin false. We want the religion of our Saints, the religion of purity, truth and love, the religion capable of producing those outbursts of real spiritual fervour which in special periods reconstructed India in all walks of life with an overdraft as it were from God against the security of its batch of the then saints. Let not lampblack and lightning stampede the finer spiritual sense from the field of human activity all over the world. If the Shylock of Science still insists on his bond and demands the pound of flesh in the

conceit that he will thereby place a bankrupt world at his feet, the apostle of mercy will soon appear in the guise of an intensely spiritualised womanhood of India and outmanœuvre him. I already hear a re-awakening India thus voicing her real aspiration :—‘Unless I can lay a firm hold on the great principle which keeps the Universe going, the sun shining, the tree growing, the man doing, I have lived to no purpose. I want that inward royalty of peace and illumination which compels the allegiance of the minor powers of Nature. Without this consummation I count myself one of the numerous failures of life. ‘Whence and Whither’ is the unresting interrogative which once more irresistibly sets me to its reply. I have always answered this deeper query and I shall go on doing it. I have done this meditating, God only knows for how long. Even when the cohorts marched past I only once opened my eyes and fell into dream again. Empires have risen and fallen, cultures and civilisations have come and gone, Nature has been doing and undoing her Penelope’s web ; Science has upset the thrones of the kings that once made her and as a reward seeks to consolidate her reign. I only stand as a witness to these tragi-comedies and aspire to

give the world the re-assuring message of real power and peace. Dr. Johnson, a great Englishman cast in the right Asiatic mould, had perhaps the premonitions that the young world in the conceit of the knowledge that puffeth up but edifieth not was heading for a precipice and said that scientific inventions may delight awhile by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest ; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth. In this truth I deal, in this truth I live, in this truth I delight. I am the world-supplier of this truth. Emerson knew it and owned it. Washington Irving spoke of the great trees that are sometimes seen on the banks of a stream : by their vast and deep roots laying hold on the very foundation of the earth, they preserve the solid ground around them from being swept away by the current, and thus save from ruin many a neighbouring plant and perhaps many a worthless weed. I am the most ancient of these trees, baffling Time's tyrannic claim to quench me and hanging on the lips of the Vedas for my protection. I stand scanning the present world of the present man :—

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A wild and dream-like trade of blood and guile,
Too foolish for a tear too wicked for a smile !

But I am not troubled. I shall dive further into the very depth of things, into the very root of my being, in search of the requisite strength for a decisive bout. Flux and fickleness, decay and death—are they the last words in the scheme of things ? No, I have seen much, known much to the perpetuation of the sense of the invisible and changeless in me. This unending procession of mountain-high surface waves, these grim, yawning, white phantasms which threaten sometimes to absorb the universal frame into their maw, but only to break on the shore the next moment, show up their colossal insignificance and murmur back to their caves, has no terror for me. They intimidate me in the name of work ! Who would have seen these outer jungles cleared away and fair seed-fields and stately cities risen instead unless my Buddhas had taught men to clear the rank jungle and water the sandy desert within ? They shout for work but neglect the pre-condition. The British bleeding warrior queen sought the counsel of her country's gods. The line has a world of meaning. Unless all selfish and ambitious desires are weeded out, no work will tell. Do the lilies in the

field that neither spin nor toil but are more splendidly attired than Solomon thrive and bloom, on sloth, contradicting the law of work, law of growth and development and corrupt and stultify the world? No, they first get into line with the truth of things, turn to their sun and god and gather that inexhaustible energy in the process which adds every thing unto them without the prodigality of demonstration and the boisterous bathos of self-seeking and self-regarding work. They lay themselves open to the salutary, enduring influences of God's light and air and allow them to work in themselves without the intervention of a spasmodic self-consciousness unrelated to its source. No, I shall revert to my old dynamic centre of work. The worker who will have to ride the tempest requires, above all, tranquility of which that peace which tempts the tired worldling is a poor counterfeit. I shall retire into my ever-energizing Within. Mathew Arnold of the West understands me :—

“Once read thine own breast right,
And thou hast done with fears,
Man gets no other light,
Search he a thousand years

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Sink in thyself ! There ask what ails thee, at that
shrine."

Lampblack and lightning is not my line.
Never, never.

NEW INDIA

Jogesh then opened the conversation with this short summing up of what had gone before :—‘your definite and emphatically expressed opinion is that the old, self-respecting India is dead and gone. And the present-day India is hanging about the royal court of a so-called democratic and scientific civilisation,—the dumping ground not only of its manufactures but of all its positive and negative ‘isms’ ; further that so far from any idea of giving, it only believes in taking, no matter whether it has the requisite power of assimilation or not. In short, to use a post-war phraseology, it does not believe in self-determination except in the matter of the personnel of a borrowed system of self-rule.

“What do you mean by saying ‘my opinion’ ?
The modern India has been christened New India

since the publication of Sir Henry Cotton's historic book of that name, foreshadowing something like your Nehru Committee's Dominion Status. 'New India' is now avowedly new India. 'The spectacle now presented by India is of a superior civilisation introduced by a conquering race'—that is the considered verdict of modern history. All your Indian critics of Miss Mayo's 'Mother India' spoke of their coming 'more and more into line with this superior civilisation. The gravamen of their complaint against her was that she erroneously took them as still hitching their wagon to the star of Hindu India. India is no longer

The moping owl (that) does to the moon complain
Of such as wandering near her secret bower
Molest her ancient superstitious reign

"I wish she were not so", exclaimed Jogesh.

You need not be at all anxious. The old India has changed beyond recognition with a new education and a new ideal. New India has long ceased to take after its old mother. It is moving under a new inspiration altogether. And that is why it is all spasms and convulsions. The result of artificial respiration in place of a healthy life-process.

"Is it the whole truth," enquired Jogesh with a sense of embarrassment.

It is at least not a half-truth. The change first begins with the ideas and the beliefs. And the complete outer transformation takes a little time.

Jogesh demanded some illustrations.

Do you care for the *Ramayan* or the *Mahabharat*, inspite of Germany being enamoured of the latter epic?

"No, I have thrown both of them to the dung-hill, as full of idiotic feats of long-tailed monkeys and three hundred feet giants".

Is that all you find in it?

"Where it appears to talk sense it talks of matters spiritual."

Have you heard of *Mannu*?

"Yes, as the author of *murderous* laws for the *Sudras*."

Excellent passport to your appreciation! Has such a thing as the *Upanishads* ever come in for your condescending notice?

"India cast off that cumbersome *slough* long long ago. It is now hanging, the rusty mail of primeval forest-men that it is, quite out of fashion, in monumental mockery."

Superb criticism ! quite Shakesperian if not entirely classical. Can you vouchsafe any further information about the *Upanishads*, they being considered the best proof of India's having possessed a higher civilisation ?

"But it is now a museum-curiosity, an amusement to mysticism-mongers like Schopenhauer,"

Oh ! you are in such refreshing agreement with that Indo-American critic of Miss Mayo who so ably represents New India.

In the light of what you have said and what all your friends say Miss Mayo's backhander, 'let your ancient scriptures say what they may, not by them and their beauty but by its present working upon their bodies and minds will your code be justified,' shows that so far as she is concerned any stick is good to beat the dog with. If she does not know that New India does not recognise any other code than the penal Code and the Civil Procedure Code then she has no business to dabble in what New India is about. Our ancient scriptures have, like our raw materials, to be sent to Europe and America to be made into something of *the latter's interest and amusement*. These scriptures have very little use for the children of the soil. They have passed an *exparte* decree on them as perfectly useless.

"Why then, these old nasty customs?" put in Jogesh by way of a remonstrance.

Not unless the old customs pay. When are they observed as a matter of principle? No, Jogesh, you are no longer tied down to the old moorings but have already cut the painter. In fact, reforms for reforms' sake—nothing short of a revolution,—none of the old silly things, good, bad or indifferent—no pausing to consider whether it is a case of bad workmen quarrelling with their tools—they must all go and there's an end on it. Even our best men think that beginning with a clean slate, that is what has become absolutely necessary. Their heart being in the right place pulls them one way but the head, under the influence of a new wine, drags them in a contrary direction. The following curious medley of an attack on and defence of child marriage taken from "Unhappy India" should clear our meaning.

"At the outset, we must admit, as we already have admitted in a previous chapter, that child marriage in India is a factor that does, no doubt, accentuate sex stimulus and cause physical deterioration. Miss Mayo's version is a gross and malicious exaggeration. We have examined it already; but the existence of this factor is undeniable. Child marriage is beyond doubt having pernicious effects on the physique of the Indians. Exactly how and when did this evil system become prevalent

may be uncertain but there can be no doubt that it is to-day eating into the vitals of the nation. It is one thing to admit child marriage to be one of the factors responsible for the material and spiritual ills of the present day India and quite another to make its existence a pretext for ignoring the still more important factors. 'Give the dog a bad name and hang it' is a recognised maxim in political propaganda, and Miss Mayo's observations on early marriage in India do not ignore it. Child marriage was prevalent among several of the peoples that produced great civilisations in antiquity. The Greeks who still inspire models in the harmonious development of the whole man (physical, mental and moral) married very early, the Romans who made good soldiers and administrators married as children, so also did the Hebrews. In *England down to the time of the Stuarts* child marriage was common. If child marriage were enough to make a nation effect the Greeks and the Romans and the Hebrews would not have left such a lasting impression on history. The fact is that a devastating factor like child marriage is seldom allowed by society to go altogether without counterbalancing safe-guards. In India this safe-guard is provided in many of the child-marrying castes by postponing the consummation of marriage a considerable period after the marriage ceremony. Marriage thus becomes a sort of betrothal and a child marriage means only child betrothal.

“Yes this is hardly understandable. Child marriage is either good or bad, it cannot be both. ‘Unhappy India’ says that ‘it accentuates sex stimulus’ while the orthodox defence happens to be that a lower age is chosen because

the woman is not then born in the girl and she has therefore to be let alone. But that is another story", added Jogesh.

"Even if educated India is western in its practices, outlook and tendency," Jogesh went on, "the vast masses remain untouched, and their life and conduct still run in the old groove."

Things are not what they seem, Jogesh. The masses, no doubt, are yet our hope ; but a change is coming over the spirit of their dream too. Do you know that only two or three years ago when they got good price for jute after a long and painful wait the orders for corrugated iron, hurricane lamps, trinkets and trumperies were so heavy that jetties were blocked and even such necessities as medicines could not be sent in time.

"Well, you should be glad of this rise in the standard of living" was Jogesh's opportune observation.

Of that afterwards. Now to your main question. It is no longer a commonplace of politics alone that the ideas of the upper classes filter down to the masses. Comforts, pleasures for their own sake, material advantages—these considerations have now begun to weigh considerably with the masses also. Litigiousness has

assumed serious proportions. Once while coming from Dacca, a Mahomedan agriculturist gave me no end of trouble on board the steamer for an introduction letter to the best pleader in Faridpur, assuring me that he was provided with sufficient funds to pay for efficient legal aid. And as they are coming to share the feeling of the middleclass youth that religious restraints are a great drag on man's true freedom the old salutary customs are not unoften abused. So, all sections of the people though professing Hinduism in name have made the three P's—pelf, power in some shape, and present pleasure—the three laws of their lives. The masses will soon become the biggest slice of New India if their denationalization proceeds at this rate.

"Yes, I too feel like it," said Jogesh and he thus continued:—"What you call our lower classes were, within our living memory, very good and loveable people. But they are fast losing their old open-heartedness, humility and spirit of service and true independence."

"I was once told", began Jogesh with considerable emotion, "a very edifying story. A common Hindu peasant of Bankura, the head of a family of two brothers and other collateral relations, put by a little money

and pressed the younger hard to marry and maintain the family line. It may be mentioned in passing that it is very difficult and expensive in some districts of Bengal to secure a bride, so far as the lower classes are concerned. The younger brother at first sternly refused, urging that it was simply impossible as the elder was alive. The elder then turned to him, an unmistakable expression of agony on his face, and said "yes it is too much to expect this of you as you are my *mushala* brother, the extinguisher of the family after the example of the *Jadu* dynasty. I cannot live long; the result of my marriage will be to leave a miserable young widow a burden on the family without any corresponding gain. When the younger brother saw the force of his argument and the wound he had inflicted on him by his refusal to marry he consented to the proposal. The elder then hugged him to his breast as his *Lakshman* brother, *Lakshman* being the devoted younger brother of Rama Chandra."

The elder also had in him the making of a Rama. We were having this type of men by the thousand when we were ourselves and when our customs and institutions were the normally evolved organs to secure the healthy flow of the

national life and ensure the purity and integrity of that invaluable wealth.

Mr. S. N. Gupta, late Lecturer of the University of Cambridge, Professor of Philosophy, Presidency College, Calcutta, Author of "History of Indian Philosophy" in his latest lecture on Hindu Mysticism given in America, thus speaks of the inherent religious nature of our masses :—

"The tiller of the soil and the grocer in the shop may be uneducated and wholly illiterate. but even they while tilling the ground, driving a bullock cart or resting after the work of the day will be singing songs full of mystical meaning, and for the moment transporting themselves to regions beyond the touch of material gains and comforts. So the sublime teaching of philosophy and the other-worldly aspirations of mysticism with their soothing, plaintive and meditational tendencies have watered the hearts of Bengal right into the thatched cottages of the land. Wealth and comfort they all appreciate as do people everywhere but they all know that money is not everything and that peace of mind and ultimate good of man cannot be secured through it or other worldly things. They are immersed in the world but still the wisdom of the ages and the teaching of the saints have not been in vain and at times they are drawn away from the world...their souls unknowingly long for deliverance and find a mystic deliverance in it. *It is only the educated or Anglicised Hindu, who, dazzled by the gay colours of the West sometimes turns a deaf ear to the old tune of his country, the flute of Krishna calling from afar through the rustling*

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of the bamboo and the cocoa-nut grove of the village homes and in the name of patriotism and progress installs a foreign God of money and luxury in the ancestral home of the God of the Indian heart, the God of deliverance."

So you see the influence of New India on our good old masses has become a matter of serious anxiety to our thoughtful, nationally-minded and observant countrymen. Our masses are being openly taught that man lives by bread alone, that there is no other incentive to strenuous, sustained and vigorous efforts on the part of a people than the prospect of a good dinner all round the year. When at the time of the last Congress I wanted to organise the Labour population of Lillooah and other work-shops into a big sankirtan party and bring them under the influence of the name of Hari as the greatest of humanising forces I was told by young men who have still some respect for men of our ways of thinking that Labour no longer understands any such nonsense as Hari nor does it care for anything that is not readily convertible into cash. Youth only fix a pitying stare on us fools and laugh in their sleeves, "what shadows they are, what shadows they still pursue!"

"Splendid !" exclaimed Jogesh.

Here was a slave of the Gods and it was a bad day for the world when science and civilization began to make short work of them, when Food entirely submerged Faith. What I feel very strongly, Jogesh, is that the quality of our race first suffered a decided change for the worse when we lost such robust faith in the deity as characterised that Indian monarch.

"But you still worship these Gods" jestingly remarked Jogesh.

Yes, I see the point of your jest. But do you know that there is a Bengalee proverb, 'there is no deity in the temple and you make only a useless noise by blowing the conch-shell'. I again refer you to the noble and manly words of the last of the Incas. Only a working faith in a higher being who will soon raise me to his goodness and greatness can produce such nobility and manliness.

I don't care whether you believe or not that Joan of Arc actually received the St. Michael's sword to turn the tide of the Hundred Years' War in favour of her country; but I have absolutely no doubt that it was her unique faith in Gods and Angels that made that little bit of a girl strong and radiant with that

wonderful courage and spirit of truth that enabled her to face the most brutal tribunal with a heroic heart and unclouded mind. When she was asked by the devil of a cross-examiner whether the arch-angel Michael had appeared naked, *not comprehending the vile insinuation*, Joanna whose poverty suggested to her simplicity that it might be the costliness of suitable robes which cause the demur asked them if they fancied God, who clothed the flowers of the valleys, unable to find raiment for his servants. It was her constructive belief in the great Father whom she believed herself to have been serving that was her great sword and armour. As to the strength and clearness of her mind, a mind which I consider incapable of any superstitious or unreasonable thought let the great Englishman who has shed a silent tear over this extremely dishonourable and infamous action of his country speak :—

‘Why, then, did she contend? Knowing that she would reap nothing from answering her persecutors, why did she not retire by silence from the superfluous contest? It was because her quick and eager loyalty to truth would not suffer her to see it darkened by frauds which she could expose, but others, even of

candid listeners, perhaps, could not; it was through that imperishable grandeur of soul, which taught her to submit meekly and without a struggle to her punishment, but taught her not to submit—no, not for a moment to calumny as to facts, or to misconstruction as to motives.'

Take again Socrates, the greatest and the highest of the 'pagan' saints of history, the man who is said to have brought philosophy from the closet into the street, the man who drank poison, as we drink the most delicious drink, after pouring like his boy predecessor Prahlad a libation from his cup to one of the Gods. 'His last prayer was for permission for a prayer to the Gods, 'that it may fare well with me on my journey yonder.' Then when the poison had reached his heart and he was cold nearly up to his middle he uncovered his face and uttered his last words : - 'Crito, we owe a cock to Aesculapus, pay the debt and do not neglect it'. 'Give me back, Jogesh, the superstition which thus takes the sting out of death and makes one as much sure of this world as of the other from whose bourne, it is said, no traveller returns.

Whoever had undertaken any great work knew full well how little he was himself the

author of it, how he was a mere instrument and an indifferent instrument at that, and that the real power came from elsewhere. Gibbon when he undertook the composition of the first volume of his immortal history thus spoke of the state of his mind :—‘At the outset all was dark and doubtful ; even the title of the work, the era of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, the limits of the introduction, the division of the chapter and the order of the narrative ; and I was often tempted to cast away the labour of seven years.’

I am reminded in this connection of Jonathon Swift’s masterly comparison of the moderns and ancients with the spider and the bee.

“So that, in short, the question comes all to this ; whether is the nobler being of the two, that which, by a lazy contemplation of four inches round, by an overweening pride, which, feeding and engendering on itself, turns all into venom, producing nothing at all, but flybane and a cobweb ; or that which, by a universal range, with long search, much study, true judgment, and distinction of things, brings home honey and wax ?

“Erect your schemes with as much method and skill as you please ; yet if the materials be

nothing but dirt, spun out of your own entrails (the guts of modern brains) the edifice will conclude at last in a cobweb; the duration of which, like that of other spiders' webs, may be imputed to their being forgotten, or neglected, or hid in a corner. For anything else of genuine that the moderns may pretend to, I cannot recollect; unless it be a large vein of wrangling and satire, much of a nature and substance with the spider's poison; which, however they pretend to spit wholly out of themselves, is improved by the same arts, by feeding upon the insects and vermin of the age. As for us the ancients, we are content, with the bee, to pretend to nothing of our own, beyond our wings and our voice: that is to say, our flights and our language. For the rest, whatever we have got, has been by infinite labour and search and ranging through every corner of nature; the difference is, that, instead of dirt and poison, we have rather chose to fill our hives with honey and wax; thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light."

This is exactly what is happening. The guts of modern brains are raising edifices that at last conclude in a cobweb.

To cultivate the universal range with long search, much study, true judgment and distinction of things is to cultivate the Gods, whom the Hindus have to call to mind along with the highest God as capable of introducing them to Him. For they alone know the whereabouts of that Bishnu's mansion which is an extended vision—something like the sky above.

"I am not yet fully convinced" was the vehement reiteration of Jogesh's first article of faith.

Who or what will then make men of us ?

"Why ? Good ideals, principles", with these words Jogesh enthusiastically threw himself into the controversy.

Ideals, words, principles, these are dead, inanimate matter, as our *Shastras* say. Are they capable of any initiative ? They neither move themselves nor can they make others move unless they become the natural self-expression of a higher life. The story goes that a fish-woman felt very uncomfortable when asked to pass a night in a flower-garden but fell into sound sleep directly the fish-basket was brought to her. What will fine formulas do unless there is a changing heart to keep pace with them ? An adopted son is an adopted son till my heart

warms up to him. Does the word of a cold, calculating, dull, unfeeling and unintelligent man having no conviction himself, influence you in the same way as that of a warm-hearted, intelligent and well-informed man who firmly believes what he says and practises what he preaches? I have always heard you say it is the ideal of the good of the community, society or humanity that should move us. Where does this '*Should*' come from? Whence the bindingness of this ideal unless our heart draws that way? How is it that we do not often see what we *should* see but rather the reverse of it.

Besides, feeble of intellect, incapable of long-view, inconstant through passion, inequibrated through the good or bad result of action, who am I to judge what is good or bad for community or society? Buckle also does not pin his faith on the strongest reason but on those capable of a pure transcendental process of knowledge. Your duty once settled, in going its ordinary round you must not wait for a Hercules but put your own shoulder to the wheel. But in deciding this duty itself you must wait till the Herculesees fetch these golden apples for you from the dragon-guarded tree of the Hesperides. You must wait for the men

who, as Jesus said, being of the truth can alone bear witness unto the truth. Visma, Drone and others first determined their respective duty in the battle of Kurukshetra and that done, they fought like elemental forces, undeterred by the fact that they were fighting against God himself. You, with your formulas and ideals, are somewhat like the meat-carrying dog with his shadow in the water. You take them to be the representation of the highest good which can reside in yourself alone as your God, but in your attempt to grasp at them you lose everything. Your efforts and disillusionment may have their meaning. Of course they have. But since the days of the French Revolution, you have been trying to master these shadows without the reality, to your infinite embarrassment. Who knows what will the efforts of Russia, who also is undoubtedly grappling with this shadow without reality most nobly and heroically, result in?

The scientists and the social idealists in their laudable groping in the dark for the good of men do recall the highly pathetic picture of *Jashoda*, *Sri Krishna's* mother of holy memory, who considerably disturbed at the growing

complaints of her child's mischievousness both at home and abroad tried to bind him hand and foot and render him innocuous. But who can put the limitless into a limit? Who can confine within a mould One for whom no mould big enough has yet been found? Small wonder, that *Jashoda* with all her indefatigable efforts to try the rope on *Sri Krishna's* person only perspired for her pains and felt herself utterly hopeless and helpless in the matter. At last *Sri Krishna* himself seeing the frightfully fatiguing industry of his mother kindly consented to be bound.

*"Drista parishramang Krishna Kripayasith
Sua landhane".*

These reformers and scientists also are trying to bind *Krishna* down with their formulas and ideals, telescopes, microscopes, crucibles and metres. But they must wait till *Sri Krishna* taking compassion on them, consents to the confinement of His omnipresence in their soul and thus irradiates it. Of course, they have made the waters of the whole world turbid, unsettling age-long belief, creating universal disturbance, making security insecure and insecurity totally uncertain in the name of preventing stagnation. But this

wholesale turbidity only proves in the words of a great Western religious thinker 'that the angel has come down to trouble the waters and the important thing is when so disturbed they have healing virtue.' The tired heroes will soon realise the presence of the angel when moved by their multiplying confusions, he himself will be amenable to their grasp. But without this angel informing our thoughts and efforts by living within us as love for all we shall only bungle and blunder and complicate things.

So these lifeless formulas and ideals have become the most inconvenient paraphernalia of the civilized man who does not believe in, not to speak of realizing God whose material instruments they are. Buckle of course is right when he says that these principles and maxims have been there since the very beginning of civilization but they had not taken men very far. That is where the supreme utility of religion comes in. Those principles and maxims are nothing still given effect to by men to whom they are as true, as fire burns or water seeks a lower level, *i.e.* by men who live them. The moral intuitions of men are effectively roused by what Buckle

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himself has called the transcendental process *i.e.*, by some sort of touch with Divinity. Maxims, formulas, ideals—they are but dead, partial and subjective symbols of God like the uncared for and unenlivened idols in the temple. 'They require the Alchemist Mind to transmute them.' They must be clothed with flesh and blood for man and not only that, they must have expression in their eyes, breath in their nostrils, and language on their lips and a personality to direct, command and coerce. They require to be personified.

*Jada jada hi dharmasya glanirbhabati Bharata
Abhyuthanam adharmasya thadatmanam*

srijammoham.

"Yes I am coming to see your point" assured Jogesh.

There are legal laws, social laws, economic laws—any number of them. But is the society and the world going on merrily like a marriage bell because of the hiccupping reams after reams of paper which have come and are coming beaten into law from the world's legislative anvils? No, nothing will help me unless I have the living Law within me, unless I myself live, move and have my being in the Truth. Which is only another name for law. It is the truth-

abiding spirit in man which is the beginning of his manness. He must go by some standard, be it even self-interest. He will be honest with himself in being guided by self-interest so long as self-interest is the only truth with him. Take from man his standard, his driving force and he comes to a sudden halt. Consideration of pleasure or personal gain is also a standard, a yard measure, a sign-post without which he cannot move an inch. These standards and units he must have. This shows that he is fixed somewhere and he cannot run anyway he likes without serious risk.

"Then you say that we all carry within us consciously or unconsciously a spirit of obedience to a certain standard", Jogesh understandingly intervened.

Very well put, Jogesh. You are then coming to my point. It is this sense of standard which may range between the lowest and the highest, which is the real motive power of civilization and not intellectual activity or acquisition as Buckle would have us believe—a belief which has been the undoing of the modern world.

Jogesh very properly wanted a little elaboration on this point.

Our intellect, as I have already hinted, is according to our *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, *jad*—incapable of any self-movement. Buckle also admits that civilization is a twofold movement, the movement of character and the movement of intellect. The character issues the orders and the intellect executes them, may be, with growing efficiency as material knowledge grows. But what is the intellect to do unless there is the sense of duty, and sense of standard to call it and set it to work? What could the magic ring and lamp avail Aladin, how could the genii, who were attached to them as slaves and were always at his beck and call, do wonders for him unless he himself were there with his definite desires and ambitions to order them? We must first settle the end before the question of means at all arises. In India this sense of standard reached its perfection, its utmost strength, its wide-spread realisation so as to become the common rule of conduct.

When young Buddha in his royal progress in his father's capital came across some sights, he is reported to have been mightily moved. History has not given a second instance of such royal renunciation. In fact, the experience proved so very disquieting that compared with it the

attractions of a throne were but a feather in the scale. The brain-wave of the young prince, to borrow your language of science, produced the mightiest reaction in the whole thought-world. But why was he so seriously perturbed at experiences which are the commonest of the common and which do not interfere even with our so-called religious man's daily round of eating, drinking and merry-making? Boy Buddha did not feel at all at home when he saw that one in such beauty of form and vigour of spirit as he himself should grow aged and infirm poisoning himself with difficulty on his stick which too was shaking in his hands. Buddha felt terribly upset and out of element when he was face to face with a man arrived at that inevitable hour when the boast of heraldry, the pomp of power and all that beauty, all that wealth e'er give was actually felt as the cruellest mockery by General Wolf who then found the poet such a truthful anticipator of his supreme hour's sentiment that he had to exclaim, 'I would rather be the author of those lines than take Quebec'. But Buddha came to himself when at last he saw a mendicant defying the ravages of time, space and environment, pacing the earth with his majestic steps—the very figure

of heavenly calm and repose. The story can only mean unless, Jogesh, you are wilfully perverse, that Buddha carried within him the glimpse of a home, a promised land which he was then determined to reach, all powerful counter-attractions notwithstanding. He had a standard, a unit of reference with which he brought into relation his experiences and found them sadly wanting. He then started on this pilgrimage towards his home. This is religion in India—man's dash for his destiny, for his education which with a higher-rising conflagration of knowledge consumes the canker of self-bound ignorance and releasing the full energy of freedom leads him out to his God. This is what Hindu India preached and practised more than preached.

"Do you mean to say that Science is then engaged in a wild goose chase"? Jogesh indignantly questioned at a fancied affront to his beloved science.

No, Science is also for the same chase as Buddha, only she hitherto lacked the courage and boldness to admit it. Does the Astronomer, as I have already said, when he sweeps the vast expanse of the heavens with his telescope, expend so much labour only on the searching of

a tiny, twinkling star? No, it is the soul at the back of the star which really beckons him and stimulates all his activity though he does not know it for the time being. Thus said the *Upanishadkar* at the very beginning of time, 'we love our son not for the son, but for the soul in the son; we love our wife not for the wife, but for the soul in the wife'. So the Mothersoul beckons through the star, the atom, the electron, the electric charges, or whatever it might be. The concentration, the effort, the single-mindedness grows by what it feeds on; it does not then care even for the object or the goal. No work, take it from me, has any sustaining power in it, unless it takes on the character of worship, and has the soul directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously for its objective. The work itself then becomes its supreme satisfaction, its highest reward and the idea of result or fruit has to take a back seat in the mind, in spite of itself. That is the natural state of the soul that has felt the call, that sees her bridegroom beckoning her from afar.

"True scientists will believe neither in soul nor God" declared Jogesh with no uncertain voice.

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Then strike the names—Newton, Leibniz, Crookes, Wallace, Thomson, Flammarion, Oliver Lodge, Janet, Lombroso, Hyslop, Barret, Myers, James—off the list. May be, they will atone by the death-bed prayer 'Oh ! my God, if there be a God, receive my soul if there be a soul'. Passionate concentration finds its heart's desire even in things lying to its hand. *Dhruba* extended his open arms to receive even the tiger and the serpent as his lotus-petal-eyed God. *Rama* clasped the nearest creeper to his bosom as his missing *Sita*. *Radha* also addressed the trees either as her *Krishna* or as those who certainly knew his whereabouts. Ophelia when she drowned herself in her madness in the attempt to garland the willow aslant a brook, was it not her Hamlet that she was decorating ? So when the scientist with his fantastic garlands of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies and long purples thinks, it is the willow showing its hoary leaves in the glassy stream which is calling him, knows not that it is the hoary Mother of the earth who is really calling him.

"This is first class poetry, no doubt," was Jogesh's feeling rejoinder.

Newton's dinner sometimes grew cold or happened to be eaten, by visitor friends with

whom he made previous engagements, but who finding him absorbed in thought for hours dared not disturb him and sometimes driven by hunger ate the dinner kept for Newton himself by his cook. Do you think one could thus go without food for hours for mere poetry? The lover and mad man thus seeks and this seeking becomes his satisfying occupation and both the object of his search as also the world at large drop out of his view. This is the nature of all worship foreshadowing the worship of God which must follow sooner or later. The deeper Science engages in her search, the more will she find that she is chasing one will-o-the-wisp after another and ultimately must come home to rest on truth even as Columbus reached the point whence he had started.

"This truth is a puzzling word. It rightly puzzled Pilate when he absent-mindedly said unto Jesus, What is truth," was the brilliant repartee from Jogesh.

Do you think that Christ on the eve of his crucifixion was cutting jokes with Pilate when he made his thrilling pronouncement :—"To this was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice?"

Here is, Jogesh, your complete answer. No philosophy, formula or ideal will do. You must be of the truth and then alone you will be able to hear him who bears witness unto the truth. The sun awakens the avalanche whose mass, thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there, flake after flake. There come men at times who are one with truth and law, who serve, work, love and sacrifice as we of the grosser clay eat, drink and exploit the world for that eating and drinking, it being the most natural and compulsory things with us. They bear witness unto the truth.

The *Vedas* tell us that when God made different castes of different temperaments, He had himself to enter their bosom as law and truth to prevent them from quarrelling, nay, to make them feel the joy and strength of living in truth and law. That is the whole of religion in a nutshell. It is the story of the lost ring—the masterly intuition of Kalidas, and unless we recover the rings royalty will not receive us. God enters and remains with us as witness, but with ninety-nine percent it is a faded memory, an attenuated impression which must be developed into a magnetic reverence—the high polish of the diamond of the ring—to

win back this presence. The truth-abiding spirit in which He exists in outline in all of us is to be kindled into truth itself. This is Hinduism. This law-abiding spirit, this nascent loyalty to the truth within has been called in our *Shastras*, *Shilam*, the one great secret of success both here and hereafter. Indra, the most virile personality among the heavenly Gods, lost his kingdom and ran from post to pillar and pillar to post, to seek the necessary knowledge for assuaging his grief. He first approached *Bramha*, who sent him to *Brihaspathi* and their hackneyed advice was 'know Bramhan and you will be at peace with yourself.' Indra was not satisfied with this counsel of perfection which to most of us does not mean anything unless we are told the first stepping stone from which we are to ascend the stairs and reach the temple. He was then referred to Prahlad, the then king of the three worlds, as the only man who could help him out of his difficulty. He became Prahlad's disciple in the disguise of a Bramhin and began to please him by his devoted service. Once Prahlad told Indra that it was *Shilam* which constituted the true secret of winning the three worlds. In the *Upanishads*, *Shilam* has been called a god. *Dhrita-*

rastra while explaining *Shilam* in the *Mahabharatha* refers to it as the tendency of the soul which keeps us from doing the least injury to others and what will disturb our peace with ourselves. This only means our tendency to assimilate the Truth which is pre-eminently a principle at peace with itself according to all the different Scriptures of the world. Indra demanded this *Shilam* of Prahlad which then left Prahlad's body and entered that of Indra. No sooner had he consented than all the other minor Gods also such as truth, law, power fled his body and entered that of Indra. Thus Indra got back his kingdom while Prahlad lost it. Here is the immortal secret of recovering all the possessions whose loss one seriously takes to heart.

*"Jatra jogeswar Krishna jatra partha dhanurdhara
Tatra sri bijayo bhuti dhruba niti matirmama."*

The side which has been taken, by the master of all marvellous unions and an archer like *Partha* is sure to be crowned with power, victory, success and an immovable moral intuition is the decisive note on which the Gita ends. So without cultivating religion there is no *Shilam* and without *Shilam* or truth-abiding spirit even earthly good will ever elude man's grasp.

"Then how are the civilised Powers, who have practically repudiated God, are now running the whole show between themselves" remonstrated Jogesh.

Just wait. They have not yet attained the age of a long-lived tree. And it is of them that DeQuincy has said after watching the trend of events in their world :—"The brilliance that was Greece is no more ; the majesty that was Rome is gone, but the nations that sat incubating over the germs of the spirit still endure." New India is a blind led by the blind.

HINDU INDIA

This truth-abiding spirit which raises persistently the question, What should or what should not be done is the very A. B. C. of Hindu religion. And hence it is the very staple of our literature, philosophy, not to speak of the Scriptures. That is also the reason why we are dogged by so many do's and donots at every step. This is the domain of intuition and not of science whose general attitude towards God has been thus significantly described by Eddington 'Something unknown is doing we don't know what.' But this attitude has of late been somewhat modified as we gather from his further remark : 'The physicist now regards his own external world in a way which I can only describe as more mystical, though not less exact and practical, than that which prevailed some years ago, when it was taken for granted that nothing could be true unless an engineer could make a model of it, ††† that overweening phase when it was almost necessary to ask the permission of physics to call one's soul one's own, is past.'

"So, science may again make a little room for religion. But religion, I am afraid, will have

to live on sufferance for a long time to come," said Jogesh with evident satisfaction.

Yes, it must continue the Cinderella of interests till the West produces a sufficient number of scientific mystics to stand sponsor to it. But India was India when she could call her soul her own. And as it is on the cards that for sometimes at least the western world will snap its fingers in the face of the truth-abiding spirit the challenge should be at once taken up. Eddington himself fears most the readers who, for his mystical tendencies, 'may look to see whether his book is on the side of the angels'; so India must once more show that a man is no man unless he stands on the side of the angels. The scientist, as we have already shown from a quotation from Buckle, is definitely of opinion that this good and evil question is not only no business of his but it has hampered the march of civilization. But all the same this "Ought" which initiates action everywhere not excepting even the West and without which the multiplicity of means is a mockery should be authoritatively settled by the self-assertion of Hindu India. It has nothing to do with the human brain, the scientist's red herring to sidetrack soul and

esteem or want anything ; whatever is fed into it it will chew up according to the laws of its physical machinery. That which in the physical world shadows the nonsense in the mind affords no grounds for its condemnation. In a world of aether and electrons we might perhaps encounter *nonsense*; we could not encounter *damned nonsense*."

There is no physical basis of the moral and spiritual life, but only a spiritual basis for everything. "Ought" takes us outside the region of science which recognises no *damned nonsense*,—the hell of the natural man at war with himself on giving the go-by to his *Shilam*. The Hindu Scriptures will give no quarters to any nonsense which divides man against himself by pandering to his lower self and contradicting the law of love. His manness, as we have already said, consists in his law-abiding spirit which according to *Manu* differentiates him from the rest of the animals.

The modern world has begun to worship science and social idealism at one and the same time. In one breath it will say there is no Truth or God, who is the grand original of all second-hand love, freedom and equality and who has to be realised to make those ideals a reality ; and in the next they will assert that there must be no distinction

between man and man, nay, distinction in every form must be abolished. As they do not believe in a changed heart through an increasing assimilation of Godliness they have to fall back on machinery, the one only God of the age. It is machinery that must make man good, that must make him love his neighbour as himself, that must make him desist from hoarding money, that must make him desist from having any possession of his own, that must make him labour for others to reap, in short, that must make him both national, international and humanitarian in his outlook. And as the most efficient machine is the cannon it must remain the inseparable accompaniment of this neo-humanitarianism. As there is no higher tribunal than the human brain which only obeys physical laws man's aspiration to rise above himself will remain a dream unless that also can be accomplished by machinery. The transfer of all allegiance from God to machinery, to inanimate ideals and formulas, has everywhere produced an atmosphere of constraint, compulsion and coercion. A lie at the heart must belie the truth on the lip. Freedom is ushering in its reign by denying freedom to individuals and groups. A dead uniformity, a murky monotony

of thought and action, in short, a cruel clipping of the very wing of aspiration is peremptorily called for. The whole business is based on a false philosophy, on a mischievous misconception of the truth of things. All men are equal in the eye of God and the wise man and not in the eye of every Tom, Dick and Harry. Abolition of preference is another name for salvation. The dictum of equality is there but both God and the wise man have been shoved into a corner. Misunderstanding and misinterpreting of these doctrines also has resulted from a growing alienation from God, from an absence of understanding humility. The most beautiful maxims become a dead letter because the spirit which is to respond to them falls into sleep for not being constantly invoked by us. It is invariably seen that the idealistic activity which happens to be in evidence at the beginning of a movement grows feebler and feebler with time till it altogether ceases. The reason is that the awakened spirit which causes those activities grows weaker and weaker for want of sustenance. The spirit also requires service from us for keeping herself fit. When the *Gita* says that men and the gods are to keep His system going between themselves by mutual

service it lays down the most important law of our well-being. When the *Rigveda* says Indra requires to be strengthened by the homage of men so that he can do them good, it only refers to the need of mutual service between the different orders of being for their mutual benefit. Even God, as he says in the *Gita*, though equal-minded to all and without any object of love or hatred of his own is only felt and known by those who go in for His presence. The world has almost scared away God by neither seeking Him nor worshipping Him. He who said that "the father seeketh such to worship him" really knew what was at the back of his father's mind. Otherwise he could not have uttered such a queer thing. And this sentiment is common to the genuine worshippers of God in all countries. Not only do we require Him but He also requires us. Love implies a relation between two. The whole creation is a logical requirement of His love. He grew warm in love, and out of that enthusiasm of love threw up the creation. He wanted to see Himself and had to duplicate Himself, may be, with a lesser degree of truth. '*Sha ikshatta.*, And therefore His first, second and third exhortation to Arjun was 'give up all other doctrines and take refuge in

The evolutionist has his natural selection. The scientist his aether. The neo-scientist his relativity or *quantum*. The social reformer his good of humanity. But all these have proved, at best, intellectual Gods and could not grant men their hearts' wish. Huxley when in the latter part of his life he was a little free from the obsession of physical basis of life was reported to have complained in the following strain :—'The more science steals the Promethean fire, the more troubles she creates for man'. Knowledge therefore was rightly made a forbidden fruit to those who forgot their God. Such a man has no right to *tapasya* for the acquisition of mere power as Ramchandra showed.

Let us, therefore, try to be real slaves of God as that is our real relation to our Maker according to *Sri Chaitanya*. Man has failed God but God has never failed man. Otherwise there would not have been any seer or saint even in these days of science and scepticism with the gibe ever ringing in their ears 'If thou be the son of God come down from the cross to which we are nailing thee'. Not so long ago, during the latter part of the Mahomedan rule, Hindu Bengal sorely distressed by a keen sense of being

deserted by God begged him hard to recreate himself and *Sri Chaitanya* was the reply.

The following story about the origin of the images in a marble cliff temple of Jabalpur, the wonder of the wonders of the place, so powerfully affects even Christian imagination that Mr. W. H. G. Holmes of the Oxford Mission could not help relating it enthusiastically in the prologue of his book entitled "The Presence of God" as a sort of illustration of what marvels prayer can achieve.

"In Central India not far from a city called Jabalpur, there is one of 'the world's wonders' to which European sightseers and Indian pilgrims flock. There is a deep river, the Nirbudda, which runs so softly that it hardly seems to move as it flows between lofty and precipitous cliffs. The wonder, however, is not in the river but in the cliffs, for they are all of marble, white, blue, black and red.

The European visitors come to see the great marble rocks which overhang the river, but the Indian pilgrims come to visit a temple which is built into the marbles. In the innermost shrine of this temple is a large image of a bull and mounted on its back are the figures of a god and goddess. If one who speaks the Hindi tongue goes to the priest of this temple and asks him how came the image there, he tells the following story.

Many generations ago, he relates, there lived in a cave of the marble ramparts of this river a holy man who spent

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his days in ceaseless contemplation of the divine. He was a man so relentless in his austerities that he was more of the spirit than of the flesh. Drawn down from their heavenly home by the compelling force of such ascetic holiness, a god and his consort appeared to him one day, mounted upon a great white bull, and for a while the god conversed with the hermit.

But after a little the holy man, unwilling that he alone should be partaker of this glory, made the request that he might be allowed to bring the people of the neighbouring village to see the deities who had thus graciously vouchsafed to come down to earth. Leave was given, but at once apprehension entered the mind of the man. Perhaps while he was gone to fetch the villagers the gods would disappear, and it would seem to those whom he had summoned to the sight that his vision was but the creation of his own ecstasy. So he again made petition: "Will ye surely stay till I return?" and the word was pledged: "We shall surely stay till thou returnest." At once he set out to the neighbouring village, making his way along the rough narrow tract at the top of the steep rocks overhanging the deep dark stream. As he went his way there kept resounding in his ears the gracious promise: "We shall surely stay till thou returnest." There came another thought. "How blessed a thing it would be if gods should for ever tabernacle among men!" Then he remembered that the promise was that the gods would surely stay *till he returned*. But suppose he never returned the gods would then stay on for ever; earth would be their home instead of heaven. Suppose he never returned! He looked down from the marble height into the dark river below. In a moment he had made his

decision. There was a loud splash ; he had flung himself into the water and was seen no more. It was abundantly worth the cost if by his death he could win the abiding presence of gods upon earth.

The priest of the temple, however, goes on to relate that the gods waited and waited, but the hermit did not return. Then, because it was too great a thing that the Divine Presence should be constantly and continually given to men, they determined that they must return to heaven. But before they ascended they carved out of the white marble a perfect likeness of themselves seated on a bull, and this they left behind as a sign that once at any rate gods had visited the spot.

To this day the Hindu priest points to the marble sign as the proof that the Divine Presence once was really there."

Nor you, ye proud ! impute to her the fault,

If Candour to the story credence nods ;

Such men were always Hindu India's salt

Oh, that we were again slaves of the gods.

Yes, the Divine Presence was there, perpetuated in marble—*India's Stone of Purity*.

What a beautiful story ! Why call it a story ? Lest that should take away from its transparent truth. Every thing must have been as it is set forth here. Or faith is a misnomer ; God's love an abstraction, a philosophical foppery, or crazy hallucination. The proof of the truth of a thing is in the human heart. When

the heart says 'yes', there's an end on it—the head shake of reason need not be heeded. Religion feeds on such stuff. Where such a story is not, religion is not. And who could have invented a story like this? It is an epic in religion. It tells us in the first place what is most reassuring news to the soul of man that by self-forgetful prayer, that by the energy of the single-minded will, that by the carelessness about personal needs which naturally attends the pursuit of all higher aims, that by the self-energizing, heart-melting contemplation of Divinity, that by making out that without the presence so passionately prayed for there will be a howling void in the heart, the Universal, the Infinite can be made to contract itself into a few feet space. Does not the father, a tall and strong-built man crawl on all fours and play the horse so that his child may ride him and feel a little happy? Where there is the naturalness, sincerity and intensity of love nothing is impossible. When God is conceived as an omnipotent king, sitting exalted high on a royal throne in heaven, the worshipper is only one of his innumerable subjects and does not come in for his special notice. Therefore the Hindu system of worship, the scheme of those

who knew their business is to establish some sort of accustomed relation with Him and to behave towards Him as an object of familiar love, affection or reverence. The great *Kali*-saint Ram Prosad says that like a mad man we generally grope for God in a dark room. But He is an object that is amenable only to some genuine passion and when that passion is wanting who can lay his hand on him? But when the right emotion wells up we can draw Him as the magnet draws the iron filing. Who knows that the saint of our story did not draw down his god and goddess with the unerring aim which Ram Prosad aimed? It is evident that he must have been on very familiar terms with the objects of his desire. As like a child he really claimed some indulgence from them, not only made them a request but took from them their word of honour that they *should* stay there till he returned. And what was the errand on which he went? To bring people from all quarters that they might enjoy with him the presence of a god and a goddess in their midst. His self was then the universal self averse to tasting even the highest bliss by himself—the reason for which God made us—to make us the partakers of His joy. Can even reason doubt that Divinity was

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in him, with him, and about him unless reason is blind? Therefore here is the climax of this triumphant selflessness. Crown and cross indistinguishably come together. So lastly when the thought flashed across his mind that if he could make an end of himself the gods should be bound by the terms of their promise to remain perpetually amongst his fellowmen, the intoxication of joy produced by the idea made him at once plunge into the water and that never-to-be forgotten loud splash was heard. Who has heard such a drama proving both God and the Hindu race? The story has proved all our theses. To see God is to be filled with dynamic love for all His beings. And before that consummation to talk of genuine freedom, love and equality is to talk nonsense. Hinduism does not live on its exalted system of philosophy, on its highest metaphysical flights, on unlived doctrines and dogmas, but the useful toil, homely joys and the highest and most obscure destiny of its saints. Here is this one life—a kindergarten of the main religious lessons which at once strike deep into the heart and memory. Who does not sigh for such a Hindu India? Who doubts that it can again fulfil our hopes and ensure our destiny?

But where is that Hindu India, Jogesh, we are hearing so much of, for some time? Are you all dreaming her distant foot-falls? Miss Mayo sees her everywhere yet brooding over the germs of superstition and religiosity. *Rama* is more in the mind of *Ravan* than in that of his most devoted worshipper. Is then this much-dreaded Hindu India really coming? Is she casting her shadow before, as coming events are said to do? I would then again place full, twig-topped pitchers at the gate to welcome her. But alas! I see her not. I have been missing her I know not since when, but she has never even once flitted across my vision. I have already told you what she is like. The signs, the features by which she was once known and recognised in this historic land of lived love and service since *Dadhichi* had laid down his life in order that the good might forge thunder out of his bones to conquer evil, are now familiar to you. Can then Hindu India be in the piles after piles of magnificent buildings resounding every evening with radio-broadcasted sonorous songs, while the fever-stricken villager in the harness in his field is only listening for the flapping of the wings of the Angel of Death? Is she in the hooting of the motor

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horn or the whirring of the flying machine overhead when the famished woman in the collapsing cottage has no rag to cover her shame and keeps indoors beyond the reach of all science-made sights and sounds? Is she on the lip of the West-touched, irreverent youth, who curses all that stands for India and swears by Marx, Malthus, Mussolini and Mammon in one and the same breath? Is she in the heart of that equality high-priest, who himself standing in a charmed circle, transcending all and surpassing all, impatient of any inaudible whisper of criticism or difference out-bramhining, even the most un-Bramhin Bramhin, an unconscious sacrifice to the superiority complex of the West, professes to level up the untouchables? Is she again in the politics of the practical man who disowns the parent-hood of the past and in pretending to be a West-emancipated Indian tempts the fate of *Trishanku* and gets hung up in the mid air, a sight for God and man? Is she again with that present-intoxicated prudence that like Aesop's dog drops off the God within his mouth to snap at His inanimate shadow of idealism? Is she again in that ghoul of a money-mad mother-in-law who torments her girl daughter-in-law to death

for the inadequacy of the periodic presents sent by her father or for ugliness deliberately preferred in a purely mercenary marriage when the highest ambition of Hindu mothers was to see their daughters-in-law installed in their own place of authority and honour before their final departure from the world ! Is she yet again with those Mayo-making reformers who do not understand that the lion painting himself is after all a leonine failing and in protesting too much fidelity to truth play into the hands of their enemies ? No, she cannot be in these tremendously disproportionate lights and shades.

How many anxious vigils have I kept, how many mournful mornings have I passed fixing my gaze on the road of hope, but not even a dim indication from the expected mother relieved my watch-weary eyes. Every fresh phase of politics thrilled my heart, quickened my steps and braced up my nerves but only to throw me into greater and greater gloom. At last the wolf comes and the Hindu India, is execrated and sought to be buried deeply in the name of freedom. How many silent tears have, I shed over this profane performance, this death-dance over

a mother's grave. But I am equally firm and steadfast in the belief that unless India becomes the old *Rishi*-reared India she will not come to her own. All reforms must tend in that direction. Till then she will not, she cannot show any real signs of life.

India rolling in the dust in a death-like swoon through one of her terrible separation-crises. Who will venture to call her back to normal life without trying the magic name of *Krishna* on her ears? That is what runs in her very blood, that is why Tilak wrote his *Gita Rahasya* in the solitary cell of Mandalay, that is why Aurobindo living in a yoga all his own, revels in a vision of divine India and that is why Gandhi when past his long occasional vexations pants to the puissant peace at Sabar-mati.

"You then burn for a Hindu India of animal incarnation and Bacchanalian rites?"—That was how Jogesh expressed the appreciation of my feelings.

Coal can be pure only when fire enters it. This is rank blasphemy-Jogesh. It may become Miss Mayo but not even the most unworthy descendant of our old Hindu forbears. Then let me again talk a little of your science though that is not my line.

Is the fact of man's constant intuition of God from the stone age to that of radium contradicted by the other fact that his God has travelled between the ghost of the ancestor or the sacred stone or plant and an one only mind at the back of things? Is the existence of a thing disproved by my present absence of knowledge as to what it is really like? The sun is an accepted fact though he is the most powerful golden god to the savage and not even a tiny star in comparison with far bigger stars to the scientist. To every Hindu his God remains unknown notwithstanding his Vedas and Upanishads, saints and sages until he discovers Him for himself. The important thing is the search, the quest, the inquiry, the elemental sense that something is there which, however much it may elude my grasp, shall someday be mine. The love-sick aspirant knows that long, long is the way, that deceptions, illusions and hallucinations will occasionally distract his attention on the way, but he shall still hold on till his inner unrest is quieted. Who knows that this inner unrest, this *khava*, to use the expressive sanskrit word, this first stirring of love was not the beginning of things as the Rig Veda asserts. Science can give no account of how the germs

and nucleated cells endowed with marvellous capacity for evolution came into existence and got their intensive powers.

But why should science feel herself beaten when asked to admit that one love or will worked through them all from protoplasm and monera, from infusoria and mollusca, from fish, reptile and mammal, up to man. What ground can she have to doubt the intuition of the sage that this embodied will when first brought within the range of clear sense-perception as organised something assumed the form of a fish, and started the evolutionary series. Then she held the potentiality of this universe on her back as a great tortoise and then rose up into a mammal as a hog, the place of the hog in the theory of evolution being that of the fore-runner of special faculties in man, and next into a half-man and half-beast and so on and so forth till the end of the series.

The mammal is, according to the palaeontologist, the third term in the series of evolution. Our Rishis, also, saw by their unerring intuition :—

This is that organic power of vision to which Mrs. Boole, the wife of the famous mathematician, Professor De Morgan and others pay the following glowing tribute :—

"I do as George Boole and De Morgan did. I bow my head in reverent thankfulness to that mysterious East, whence comes to us wafts of some transcendent power the nature of which we ourselves can hardly state in words."

"The great mathematician, Professor De Morgan, caused to be published in England a treatise on Maxima and Minima by the Hindu Ram Chandra, teacher of Science in Delhi College. The Calcutta edition was published in 1850 and the London edition (W. H. Allen and Co.) in 1859. In his preface to it the Professor states (I summarize) that 'the English forget that there still exists a body of literature and science which might well be the nucleus of a new civilization, though every state of Christian and Mahomedan civilization were blotted out of existence.' Thus in Sir John Herschel's article "Mathematics" in Brewster's Cyclopaedia, it is said "The Bramhasiddhanta, the work of Bramhagupta, an Indian astronomer of the 7th century, contains a general method for the resolution of indeterminate problems of the second degree, an investigation which actually baffled the skill of every modern analyst, till the time of Lagrange's solution, not excepting the all-inventive Euler himself." Professor De Morgan published Ram Chandra's book to prove to English men of science that the Hindu mind, even of the day of its publication, mastered, without the aid of the differential calculus, problems which, among Europeans, had only been solved with the help of the calculus. This is an instance of the statement 'that a Hindu may have an organic power of

vision such as an European had either never developed or has lost.' (Sir John Woodroffe's letters on the Restoration of Indian Culture).

Does not the evolution of the lower forms of life as also the history of man bear unmistakable testimony to the working of this one will both down and up the tree? And is not this will same-minded both to these higher and lower forms? She is apparently Kali out to kill, *lalohang loka khyokrith probriiddha*,—dragons of the prime that tore each other in their slime as also dragons of the present who are piling armaments upon armaments for a near or far Armageddon. But still this will is love through her lolling tongue, blood-dripping hands and garland of skulls when rightly approached. Red in tooth and claw still she does not shriek against the creed of love as the uninspired poet feared; for there is a science to turn this frown into smile, to understand its inner meaning, to convert this terrible aspect of Rudra into the benign countenance of Bishnu. This science is called religion. Has not Arjuna too trembled at this tooth and claw? But he also commanded the penetrating gaze to get at the cause and motive behind and could thus spare the well-

known rational blasphemy 'In sober truth nearly all the things which men are hanged for, and imprisoned for doing to one another, are Nature's everyday performances.' Without an insight into the laws of karma and the great counter law of His grace that must descend on those who atone for the past by a 'clean life ensuing' the theologian must shock reason and commonsense by the patent paradox 'the power that launches earthquakes and arms cuttlefish has but a meagre relationship to the power that blesses infants and forgives enemies.' Religion has not lived only on lies and human imaginings. Who could die the most magnificent deaths not with curse but blessing on their lips except those who were led out to their God by instinct or education? Who have made the productive periods of history except those with whom their religion was their life-breath? Bacon who is honoured by the rationalist as the man who brought science and scepticism to England and set a virile civilization at work thus speaks of the secret of Queen Elizabeth's greatness :—'No sooner she taketh the sceptre into her sacred hands, but she putteth on a resolution to make the greatest, the most important, the most

dangerous alteration that can be in a state—the alteration of religion****. Yet notwithstanding the opposition so great, the support so weak, the season so improper—yet I say, because it was a religion wherein she was nourished and brought up, a religion that freed her subjects from pretence of foreign powers, and indeed the true religion, she brought to pass this great work with success worthy so noble a resolution.' And what did this religion make of her? It produced a supreme contempt of peril and a supreme contempt of profit, the sceptre and crown of monarchy in the domain of the spirit. She coveted not the possession of Scotland and refused the sovereignty of the United Provinces of the Low Countries though both were within her grasp. In this matter she behaved like the Buddhist kings because religion was her inspiration. Even the sceptic scientist and the agnostic swear by duty. When the scientists began to claim George Eliot as their own it was because of her pronouncement on 'the three inspiring trumpet-calls of men—the words *God*, *Immortality*, and *duty*—how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second and yet how peremptory and absolute the third'. With due defer-

ence to George Eliot and her scientific admirers I beg to ask how can duty be peremptory and absolute to one to whom neither God nor Immortality is a living reality? The average sense of duty, everyone will concede, may lead a man as through a spirit of the routine or convention up to a certain distance till the importunity of egoism does not force his hands to prefer safety and utility to duty. It was only the visited of the gods who felt the absoluteness and peremptoriness of duty. It was the nonconformist Dinah in George Eliot and not the new-born agnostic who thus felt the peremptoriness and absoluteness of duty. Duty is the *dharma* of *Bhagrat Gita* where Krishna has repeatedly brought home to Arjuna that without seeing God no man can truthfully do his moral, social or spiritual duty.

And is the seeing of God really a big order, one to which science can never reconcile herself? Man has no faculties, says science, by which he can even form a conception, from any discoveries of the telescope or microscope, from any experiment in the laboratory or from any facts susceptible of real human knowledge, of what may be the first cause underlying all these

phenomena. Yes, science is right; sense and its auxiliaries are out of court here. But let science take the faculty of love in the hand and train it to the highest point of vision. Wonderful is this faculty of love—the master-mover of men. Who can set a limit to its possibilities? When things were not, when existence or non-existence was not, when the senses were not, God saw, says the *Veda*, and called the creation into being. Sri Chaitanya says not through any blind or unreasonable faith in any doctrine or dogma but through his own inner experience that God then saw with his pre-sensuous eye of love and consciousness inextricably woven up into one. This realisation is not to come through the formula of *Cogito Ergo Sum* which science has laughed away as a broken reed but by its very antithesis of stopping all thinking and ‘egoing’—by the absolute self-forgetting flow towards the Uncreated which is the real purpose and meaning of the feminine principle. This is the lesson of Brindaban, the *sanctum sanctorum* of Hinduism, which is said to be a sealed book even to highest asceticism. An infinitesimally faint conception of the power and possibility of this love which can apprehend its maker and make him its own

can be formed from the poet's description of the potency of love first learnt even in a lady's eyes.

Love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immured in the brain,
But, with the motion of all elements,
Courses as swift as thought in every
power,

And gives to every power a double
power,

Above their functions and their offices.

It adds a precious seeing to the eye ;

A lover's eye will gaze an eagle blind :

A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,

When the suspicious head of theft
is stopp'd :

Love's feeling is more soft and sensible

Than are the tender horns of cockled
snails ;

Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus
gross in taste.

For valour, is not Love a Hercules,

Still climbing trees in the Hesperides ?

Subtle as Sphinx, as sweet and musical

As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his
hair ;

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And when Love speaks, the voice of all
the gods
Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony.
Never durst poet touch a pen to write
Until his ink were temper'd with Love's
sighs;
O! then his lines would ravish savage
ears,
And plant in tyrants mild humility.

The spiritual counterpart of this love spoke in Brindaban with the voice of all the gods and the high heaven drowsy with the harmony came down to cultivate its nearness. In Hegel's native land of the spirit Psyche only drank the waters of oblivion and forgot her sorrow. But what is the destiny of Radha—the soul of India? Krishna bears Radha's music in his heart as Wordsworth did of the solitary reaper and creates himself again and again in the hope of imitating her inimitable lay. But let us not 'attempt' this heaven-kissing height of Hinduism. To us the Pisgah height is enough from which that promised land can be sighted from afar. Let us first attempt the 'promotion of native effort towards the restoration of the native mind in India' as Professor

De Morgan so excellently put it. Then we shall be in a position to understand Hindu India and negotiate all its depths and heights.

So I repeatedly ask you if you see the least sign of this Hindu India? How many pitfalls could I have avoided with a Hindu India guiding my feeble and faltering steps! How confidently could I have planted my feet on the way to life; how securely could I have reposed on the truths which are now only the dying echo of the vanishing voice! But why? The saints still live for me. Dattatreyas, Shankars, Ramanujas, Sridhars, may be too much for my dull and lamp-black-dimmed intellect but there is a galaxy of modern saints from Chaitanya and Tulsidas to Ramkrishna and Vijaykrishna, each one a host in himself, still shining like God's own lamps hung up in the vault of heaven, to guide, cheer and encourage the high and low, rich and poor, wise and foolish, fallen and pure. They can make and unmake, they can take a handful of dust from the street and make it man.

They can make even an untouchable like me touchable if I only care to go in for their mercy.

Jogesh got a little breathing space here, something like a loophole, and at once put in

'How could such a Hindu India create the untouchable'?

Oh! the letter killeth everywhere. Concentration on mere form regardless of the spirit is a regrettable human weakness and New India means ninety-nine percent form and one percent spirit. Hinduism has never left the truly deserving unrecognized. Every untouchable from the Vedic times downwards has become touchable here by moving his maker to mercy. You have the case of Kabash in the Vedas who though exiled to a waterless tract got the place flooded with water through the strength of his penance and prayer. My own Mahadeva, the god of the gods to all Hindus, has immortalised an untouchable 'of untouchables'—a poor huntsman by birth and profession who at the end of his day's labour found himself utterly helpless in a jungle when the winter night came with its violent storm and rain and had the thought of the Lord of the fallen, to use Tulsidas's luminous phrase, naturally addressed to his mind. He deposited his game at the foot of a *bel* tree with branches near the ground and climbed into it to save himself from wild beasts, carried his gloomy thoughts far on into the night when a few big tears caused

by severe anxiety about his starving people at home broke a *bel* leaf by their weight and dropped it on a *Shivalingam*. Mahadev was mightily pleased and treated him as worthy of his highest benediction. He further enjoined on the whole of Hindu India the celebration of this redemption night of an untouchable as the greatest of meritorious acts. To the Hindu the Bramhin and Sudra are both essential parts of the same body politic. God made not only the Bramhin, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra but also *Dharma*, the sense of duty, to induce harmony and cooperation between them. Shankar while interpreting this particular text of the *Brihadaranyak* has made use of the significant illustration that as lamp, oil, wick, and fire, all mutually destructive materials, further the common object of illuminating a place while each does its own bit without importing any other consideration into the matter, so are the different castemen to work without fretting or hating but only remembering that

Honour and shame from no

condition rise

Act well your part there all the

honour lies

"But practice is not profession" was the instantaneous reminder from Jogesh.

Therefore bring back Dharma—a living sense of duty—the old compelling moral intuition—God's own firsthand safeguard against abuses and do not pin your faith on mere machinery to secure spiritual ends.

There was no caste bitterness in Hindu India. Hindu India means a land of charity and goodwill. Sri Ramchandra even while killing a Sudra for practising *lapasya*, out of his stern sense of duty, addressed him as *muni* or sage and reproached his own arm for its accustomed inhuman act. Or more probably Bhababhuti put the prevalent Hindu sentiments into Rama's mouth.

"You still look forward to such a Hindu India?" was the bantering enquiry interposed by Jogesh.

Who knows who is praying his heart away in the impenetrable solitude of a mountain cave or of a jungle for the future India? Govindapada had sat absorbed in deep, life-long meditation, surrounded by earnest enquirers grown grey in the sickening process of waiting for his waking hour, summer after summer having thus rolled

over his head for a large number of years. But no sooner had the boy Shankar arrived on the scene than the *yogi* more dead than alive to the outside world was startled out of his long-drawn trance, and at once enquired about his juvenile visitor to touch, teach and test him into the coming man of the age to the astonishment of all the ageing aspirants after his grace. Will not history repeat itself?

"Is there not a single ideal Hindu in the present-day India"? enquired Jogesh even after my expatiation on the Hindu ideal and outlook.

'A tree,' they say, 'is known by its fruit.' The mongoose of the Mahabharat whose insinuation about incipient disloyalty to the Hindu ideal even during the installation of the righteous king Yudhisthir has been given a prominent insertion at the beginning of this book ought to have made it clear to you that no true Hindu can contentedly sit down to his own dinner when he comes to know that there are starving or ill-fed people all around him. Last year when the Congress Committee deputed me to inspect some of the famine-stricken villages

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of the Khulna District I found out that the local elite never cared to enquire what was going on in those out of the way villages though the distress of the people was protracted and appalling. King Dilip when he once met Bashista attributed the long life and perfect peace and happiness of his subjects to the benign influence of the Bramhmic culture.

Manu emphatically declared that death can not hurt a Bramhin unless he gives up religious studies, active habits and uncontaminated food. The degeneration of Hindu India became more marked when even a king like Parikshit put a great insult on a Bramhin sage on a vow of silent meditation, for not answering the former's question about a hunted deer. When the son of the Bramhin cursed the king with the curse of death within seven days the Bramhin's grief and remorse knew no bound. He told his son plainly that he had spoilt the hard-earned fruit of his *tapasya*, by his un-Bramhmic anger and grievous wrong to a king who protected them with love and justice. Thus the Hindu ideal has suffered an unconscious though progressive degeneration. And now you are deliberately filling the atmosphere with the hedonistic, utilitarian, egoistic and

uncharitable spirit as the one thing needful for the good of your country.

"What then becomes of your race-spirit?" triumphantly asked Jogesh as if he has scored a point.

'Yes, the race-spirit which survives all sorts of acquired badness is our only hope. Jogesh, you profess to be a student of Eugenics. Does not modern Eugenics say that transmission of modifications is a false theory? Don't you see that most of our women still retain the old feminine virtues though the craze for finery and luxury seems to be common to both the sexes? I shall tell you here something of a rich Hindu widow of Bengal and my own mother and aunts-in-law who were scrupulously faithful to the Hindu ideal though their surroundings mostly yielded to anti-Hindu influences.

'She was married overnight. The family sweeper just met her in the court-yard as she was hurrying upstairs after her morning wash in the pond. The sweeper asked her as was his wont "Sister darling! May I take away the refuse of the last night's feast?" "Let mother come" was the immediate and unusual reply. The mother happened to be

within hearing distance and the girl's words fell on her ears like the cutting edge of a knife. She could not help speaking up "When had mother to be asked on these matters before? Only one night has wrought this change and you are a stranger in your parents' house!"

That is what a Hindu girl is : she has an inborn sense that she is on pilgrimage here—the water-drop on the lotus-leaf where she is to rest awhile before gliding down. No freak of Nature but a being evolved by the ideal of the race. To-day she is under the parental roof, the right hand of the mother, the *de facto* ruler of the house, the father's pet, the brother's playmate and companion, the kind, majestic mistress of the servants, helping, serving, reprimanding, recommending and counselling. To-morrow comes the call and she leaves the scene of her maiden sway, the holy spot of so many associations round which have entwined the soft fibres of her child heart, and migrates to a fresh field and pasture new. There she sees new parents, new brothers, new sisters, new servants, new environment, in short, a new family-tree on which she has to graft herself when very young. It is no loveless world. But here she

has to enter on a life of discipline, think more of duty than of rights. The mother-in-law thus coaches her in her new duties : "Daughter dear ! you must rise early in the morning, wash and change your clothes, pluck flowers for the worship of the household gods, do your little bit to peel and pare the vegetables, help me cook in the kitchen if possible, keep near the widows at their foodtime and respectfully accept from them balls of mixed up remnants of food offered by them as token of affection ; then as evening comes trim as many lights as you can, incense the rooms, attend the light-swinging service, hear the moral tales from the ladies, and pay your respects to your superiors before going to bed."

This is a rough sketch of her duties in her father-in-law's place a few months after marriage. She has very little to do with her husband in her new home at least for the first few years. She may steal an odd hour for thinking of those she has left behind—an infant brother or sister whom she loved and who must have been missing her.

The girl with whose abrupt change after the marriage night I have started this story

was married to one of the biggest zeminders of Bengal. And he died shortly after his marriage. And the girl wife is now a girl widow with a large property to administer and enjoy. Placed in possession of a palace and plenty of pleasurable things, and in command of an army of officers and servants and pressed from all quarters not to practise the rigours of widowhood all at once it was expected that she would yield a little. But she smiled a good-natured smile to the loving requests of well-meaning friends and relations and issued the following orders :— “From the moment I shall relinquish all the signs of wifehood and bare my wrist of my conch-shell bracelet I will not enter any of the rooms of this mansion. You must improvise me a thatched hut on the terrace ; I shall dry my single cloth on my own person, cook with my own hand a little rice and take it unsalted ; I will live strictly on one meal a day ; all articles of luxury and enjoyment must be taken away from my residential quarters ; an old and trusted officer must teach me state business regularly everyday ; a big house is to be set apart where applicants for state help must be received and entertained and an officer must be placed on special duty to enquire into their

cases and present them to me for my personal consideration and disposal."

Friends and relations began to grieve and importune her not to be so much self-denying from the very beginning. But her will was law. She was, however, neither rude nor ill-mannered to any one. She thus explained to them her real situation :— "This stroke of misfortune means for a Hindu girl a distinct and unmistakable summons to a life of renunciation, service and prayer. God has marked me out for this special favour and I have no option in the matter. We Hindu women are pilgrims on this earth in the strictest sense of the term and

Fulness to such a burden is

That are on pilgrimage ;

They take, what Providence may please

To give, from age to age

As a maiden I had it all my own way in my father's family. I changed in one night. Then I became the wife of a very rich man. To-day I am a widow. Lilavati's father, you may have heard, moved heaven and earth to cheat destiny but she became a widow as soon as she was married. Her father then thought that God wanted her to fulfil some special object of His.

So she received the best education and turned out a mathematical giant. We Hindu women are literally the mediums through which a higher will works. We have always to listen for the call. To live a life unattached to the surroundings, is at once our trial and privilege. So, we must gladly submit." She crowned a life of unprecedented self-denial and self-mortification with wonderful acts of private and public beneficence. She used to give away thousands and lacs without allowing the supplicants to feel the least indignity of their position. Once there was a severe fodder famine in Bengal. She filled hundreds of boats with all the available fodder, herself got into one of the boats, and saw to the proper distribution of the fodder amongst the large number of the famine-stricken cattle. When she was awarded a title and sword in recognition of her splendid service her simple and quiet answer was "A Hindu woman is precluded from receiving any honour unless she is in a position to transfer it to her husband."

The Hindu woman feels in her heart of heart

Were this frail world our only rest,

Living or dying, none were blest.

There lies her strength. As pilgrim she comes, as pilgrim she lives, as pilgrim she departs to her 'God who is her home'

"Let me hear something of your mother and aunts-in-law as promised," said Jogesh.

All that I have known and loved of Hinduism is the gift of a mother and two other near widow relations. The latter were my wife's aunts and became widows when in their teens. I have seen these three live Hinduism. If Hinduism means not to spare oneself in the service of others whether nearly or distantly related, if Hinduism means, while setting the affections on the Most High, doing the duties nearest to the hand with concentration and devotion, then these three ladies can be rightly described as representative Hindus. It is therefore no sentimental surprise that I feel when hearing all the silly things urged against the Hindu religion and the customs and institutions evolved under its influence. It may all be true about us who have rejected that ideal but why should the slaves of the gods be charged with slavery to the animal man?

My father, a saintly Sanskrit scholar of somewhat ascetic bent had decided to live at Benares because of the difficulty of living an

ideal Hindu life amidst the budding heterodoxy of the day. Instead of trying to bring the straying within the strict Hindu fold he let them go their own way and himself removed to Benares to continue his strict Hindu tenor of life. But he died within a few months of his removal. He left us absolutely penniless and my mother had to return home with us to our native village to shift for herself. I recall with pride how she rose to the height of the occasion. She was too independent and mindful of the interests of her children to live with my cousins. She had to build us a separate house. The cry of the inhuman type of untouchability seems so unreal to me because I saw her freely co-operating before bath even with Mahomedan labour in digging earth for the foundation of the huts as also in thatching and fencing them. Her favourite day-labourer was a Mahomedan old man who went by the name of Shoma the simpleton. He was an enormous rice-eater and my mother took a peculiar delight in feeding Shoma to his heart's content. She used to pay Shoma everyday in spite of other calls on her almost empty purse. She was always prepared to go so far as she could do consistently with her own orthodox notions

of purity and propriety. She had to make up the dearth of the necessary funds for settling down to a new home life by an enormous amount of physical labour. She almost ignored the need of her own flesh. She would rise long before dawn and labour till far into the night for her children and neighbours appropriating to herself an odd hour in the afternoon for cooking her own food. Only slightly aided by an affectionate cousin of mine she had to maintain a family of five, educate two sons and a son-in-law and discharge the other obligations of an orthodox Hindu family with her own singular resourcefulness. For eking out the nominal income of the family she used to send me in company of my *pandit* relatives to the *shraddh* ceremonies of the well-to-do deceased of distant places to earn either a piece of white cloth, a brass plate or at most a couple of rupees. I remember how she looked forward to these small gifts to keep the pot boiling for at least a few days. She would accompany me a certain distance to the village market, herself loitering midway in the house of a fisherman or a potter giving me the necessary instructions for exchanging the piece of cloth or brass plate for the then necessities of the

family. But as English education was weakening people's faith in the ancient learning as well as the Hindu rites and ceremonies the *pandits* were in for a very thin time of it in that the duty of financing the old learning had no longer its old hold on the upper classes of the community. So these occasions of adding to the income of the family by going in for the gifts distributed among the *pandits* and their dependants during the *sradh* and kindred ceremonies in the houses of men of means began to be few and far between. My mother then fell to borrowing. Her integrity and determination to keep the pledged word at any cost constituted her chief credit. The small women money-lenders of the village came to trust her to such an extent that she could raise a paltry loan at any hour of the day. Her chief patroness was a low caste woman of the village whom she admitted to the verandah without the least hesitation during her visits for my mother's advice on her family matters. She taught us to look upon this woman's one only son as our own brother. A few poor lower class families were our neighbours and my mother's regular practice was to feed one widow by rotation everyday on the pretext of having her cooking pot which always

contained sufficient food for the widow and her dependants, cleaned up for her. She was somewhat socialistic in her ideas. It was her regular habit to enquire if there was any fear of any one of those poor people going without food before deciding on the quantity she would cook for herself. She could never bear the thought of the marriage or thread ceremony being celebrated away from one's native home thus depriving the dependent caste people of their legitimate share of the benefit accruing to them from such celebrations and sometimes to bring nonconformists to her views she would offer to cook for and serve to hundreds of people, and all this when fish kitchen did not suit her at all, necessitating constant spitting.

Her chief strength and inspiration was the memory of her dead husband which she cherished with such love and reverence that I have no difficulty in understanding the intensity of the emotion on which such institutions as widowhood and the like were based. She hesitated in putting us to an English school as it was against my father's last wish, but she had to yield when the influential men of the village brought it home to her that the old learning had no longer any pecuniary value.

She used to consult the almanac every now and then before the date of my father's annual *sradh* ceremony and she saw to its performance strictly in accordance with the rules. She availed herself of this opportunity to do her duty by her husband according to her sense of the irreducible minimum and sometimes the neighbours would come down on her for doing it on what they took to be a needlessly lavish scale. Nothing would please her so much as to see her sons practising the three daily prayers indispensable for a Bramhin after the necessary wash. What was really at the back of her mind was that default in this respect would amount to treason to the memory of an exceptionally pious father. An unusually affectionate mother, she never even once allowed the disciplinarian in her to sleep over the least lapses in the matter of propriety. The slightest sexual indecorum on our part threw her into a violent passion. My two elder sisters were married when they were only eight, my father having been a devout believer in the principle of *gouri dan*, that is, marrying the daughters at an age when they could be credited with the purity and innocence of Gouri and expected to acquit themselves as Gouri during their married lives.

Both my sisters fainted on the occasion of their marriage for observing a strict fast in the hot season of the year, but they did not bear any child before their seventeenth year. She never allowed me even to talk with my wife before the age was on her and once when she detected me committing such an offence when she just returned from her dip in the Ganges, she stopped all conversation with me for seven days.

She would fast in season and out of season. Her *Savitri bratha* was the talk of the village. *Savitri bratha* is a prayerful penance for developing such devotion to the husband as enabled Savitri, one of the two chastest ladies of India, to win back her dead consort from the deity presiding over death. This ritual requires austerity of a severe type and my mother imported into it some special features of her own. She would fast for three consecutive days, do the cooking and serving with her own hands for the invited Brahmins and other people and superintend almost all the details of the ceremony with her own eyes. And on such occasions the lower caste neighbours also came in for a due share of her attention. What I specially noticed in her was her com-

parative freedom from absurd caste scruples under the pressure of love and the spirit of service. A *Kayastha* friend of mine, a professor of a Calcutta college who used to live with me, had once an attack of cholera. My mother was the principal attendant on his sick pillow and nursed him back to life. Upadhaya Bramhabandhab, the great Christian nationalist, took sometimes a Sind Christian girl of six years with him in his morning round. Whenever he visited our house with the girl my mother insisted on serving food to her with her own hands. She never allowed her daughters-in-law to cook or do any painstaking work so long as she was alive. So far as austerity was concerned few widows, I think, could think of competing with her. She used to go to Kalighat and come back home on foot. The few years she was in Calcutta, ablution in the Ganges at dawn of day was a compulsory duty with her. Thus she wore herself to death by her exceptional fidelity to her standard of Hindu life.

The two widow relatives I have mentioned were literally the ministering angels in the family of their brothers. They perhaps saw their husbands only on the marriage night. Every one of their three brothers married twice and had a

large number of children dependent entirely on their sisters' care. The younger was the servant of the whole village. There was no such dreadful disease as could keep her away from the sick bed. Once she was missing for hours together during the early part of the night. The whole family grew extremely anxious, and some village men also engaged in the search. At last she was discovered in a poor woman's cottage nursing her seriously ill child on the sly for fear of being prevented from continuing such service if openly practised. She had a mania for pilgrimage and there is hardly an important place of India which she had not visited. On those occasions also works of charity appealed to her most. I still remember how her brow darkened at her critics when charged with the non-observance of strict caste rules while on her errands of service. Every Hindu family can still boast of such high-souled widows.

"Then so far as the Hindu male population is concerned you feel that it is all slipping and snapping", asked Jogesh.

You must have seen by this time that the chief feature of Hinduism is to serve others at the expense of one's lower self. I shall give you an example of how this spirit of service happened

to cling to some people even when personal enjoyment came to be the prevailing ideal of the upper classes of the society :—It was a close-summer evening. A middle-aged Zeminder of the village Ulo near Shantipur in the district of Nadia just returned from his evening walk and took his seat in his accustomed place in the parlour. It was then the days of punkba-pulling but the subject of our story did not rise above the hand fan. A servant was waving a fan over his head when his eyes fell on the thick floating wick of the earthen lamp in the room. He at once got up from his seat and was about to beat his servant for making the wick so thick and causing a waste of oil when the latter hastened to set things right and was spared the blows. He then resumed his seat and had a few pulls at his old-fashioned, plain *hukla* when he asked the servant to fetch before him from the guest house the poor Bramhin who had *called in the morning for some pecuniary help* in his daughter's marriage. The servant found the Bramhin getting ready to leave the place and told him that he had been sent for. The supplicant then felt that he was not far out in his apprehension and entreated the servant to.

let him off, but to no purpose. The latter knew his master's ways and what it was not to be all attention to a man in want; so he insisted on his seeing the rich man. As he approached the latter his heart was well nigh sinking within himself. Seeing the Bramhin so much perturbed the Zeminder asked him in a somewhat reassuring tone why he had not put in his appearance earlier and pressed his suit as arranged in the morning. The Bramhin began to hum and haw and make out that he had somehow managed the money from other sources. The gentleman could then see that his supplicant was for some reason or other afraid to reopen the matter to him and without waiting to be told how much he needed, ordered the cashier to pay him one thousand rupees. Out of the fulness of heart the mouth speaketh. Overwhelmed with gratitude the Bramhin made a clean breast of the affair to his unique benefactor. He said that he had come to his place just at the appointed hour, but on seeing him about to belabour his servant for putting a thick wick in the burning oil he feared worse consequence if he plied him with any prayer for money and decided to avoid such a fate by leaving the place in haste.

The Zeminder took the dust of his feet and asked his blessing for being enabled to continue this parsimony and to keep off the widespread contagion of high life which civilization was then bringing in its train.

"Yes, such charities have entirely disappeared in these days and given place to organized beneficence", said Jogesh.

Yes, given place to organized selfishness and abuse. Hinduism without daily personal service is unthinkable. Some forty years ago I saw a fellow-villager of mine taking his food late in the afternoon after feeding a fixed number of guests, cattle and birds. But even then people began to call him a crank.

"But do you expect the reappearance of such cranks?" enquired Jogesh in jest.

I believe in the silent working of the race-spirit in spite of your revolt against everything Indian. You have got only to drink deep till the ape and tiger die. Have you heard the name of Lord Sinha?

"Hoping against hope. But what has Lord Sinha, who may be described the bronzed English gentleman rightly honoured and rewarded by the Government as exemplifying the height to which Indian talent can climb

when liberated from the thralldom of his country's evil cultural heritage, got to do with your idle expectation of a Hindu renaissance? Can such a thing again come after Miss Mayo's merciless flagellation and educated India's complete reawakening to the enormity *of the Indian customs and practices?*"—Jogesh thus read me a short impassioned lecture.

Excuse me. I am perpetrating another impertinence. Did you ever come across such a person as Sir Gooroodas Banerjea?

"With due deference to his memory I must say if he were alive to-day and continued his public activities after the court-hours with his antediluvian ideas and hopeless clinging to a dead and disreputable past then he could hardly have escaped the modern young man's gushing respect for age, his ermine notwithstanding"—thus plain-spoke Jogesh.

Then hear what your bronzed English gentleman wrote of this western-educated conservative Bramhin, a chip of the old block, on the occasion of his 7th death anniversary and what he appreciated most in him. I want to draw your special attention to the portions italicised.

MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

"When I first came to know that great man, he was still a member of the Vakil Bar. I saw him raised to the Bench and practised before him as an advocate all the years he was a judge of the High Court and received much kindness at his hands. He retired, as soon as he attained the age of 60 years, though *he was as hale and hearty then as he ever was in his life but his conscience would not allow him to stay in office one day beyond the allotted limit, for he considered himself bound by the existing rules to resign. That was the man all over.*

It was my privilege to meet him now and then during the many years his life was spared after his retirement, in the course of many useful public functions *all of which he made it a point to attend religiously. It was ever his motto to serve his fellowmen and he lived and died, in the enjoyment of his countrymen's love and affection, their high regard and deep esteem.* Bengal is sanctified by the memory of such a son. Brilliant student, erudite scholar, devoted educationist, able advocate, upright judge, he was all that and more. But I remember him best and if I may reverently say so :— *love him best as the mild and pious Hindoo who while endowed with the best western culture, rigidly adhered throughout his long life not merely to all the old Hindoo ideals but to all the Hindoo practices of religion. I cannot think of that frail little body without also recalling the facts that his mother's lightest wish was to him "law divine", that rain or hail never prevented him from walking long distances every morning to wash himself in holy waters, that after a strenuous day in the heated atmosphere of court a glass of Ganges water was all the refreshment he would allow himself.*

Coming from me whose whole life appears, so far as outside public is concerned, to be a long challenge to orthodoxy, this will perhaps be a surprise to many of my countrymen. They will ascribe it probably to my subliminal Hindoo consciousness, the incredible longing for the ascetic's end as a fitting crown to an active life. It may be so; I will not deny it. But I explain it to myself somewhat differently.

I am one of those who refuse to renounce my Hindooism however little room there may be for me personally in the Hindoo social organism. It dawned upon my mind quite early in life that Hindooism was large enough and broad enough to retain within its fold those who believed in God and those who rejected Him—both those who believed in "One God and one alone" as well as those who worshipped the whole Pantheon of 33 crores.

We do well to remember that for conduct in ordinary life which the law can not reach there must be the further rule of religion for the vast majority of us. Forms of religion vary from age to age and from country to country and no one of them can be absolutely free from error. *The average man must bear in mind that although observances may seem offensive and stories told about the Gods may seem incredible, yet as a rule of action a system which has been the growth of ages is infinitely more precious than any theory which he could think out for himself. He will know that his own mind, that the mind of every single individual is unequal to so vast a matter—that it is of such immeasurable consequence to him to have his conduct wisely directed, that, although the body of his religion be mortal like his own, he must not allow it to be rudely meddled with—"He may think as he likes about the legends of Zeus and Hero but he must keep his thoughts to himself, a*

MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

man who brings into contempt the creed of his country is the deepest of criminals, he deserves death, and nothing else".

So said Plato—The wisest and gentlest of human law-givers and so lived and died Gooroo Dass Banerjee, a man of precisely the same type as the great Greek Philosopher.

I for one cannot but feel the most respectful admiration for Gooroo Dass Banerjee's adherence to the age-old process which inculcated reverence for our glorious past and forbade rude manipulation of hallowed forms. To me the most hopeful signs of the times are those which unmistakably point to a reconciliation between two opposing forces in our midst, inherited tendencies and acquired characteristics, as Lord Ronaldshay calls them.

Gooroo Dass Banerjee, one of the earliest "Master of Arts" of C. U. was one of the first to combine the scientific knowledge of the west with the profound learning and spiritual culture of the east. As such I make my profound obeisance to his sacred memory."

"Lord Sinha had softening of the brain during the latter part of his life," murmured Jogesh.

Or he would not have advised the shutting of the gates of the Calcutta University Senate on our youth in a later communication to the press. Tennyson also suffered softening of the brain when he ceased to talk "Behind the Veil" and wrote his "Ancient Sage".

Do you know that this Mayo game is as old as your new culture and Gurudas Banerjee true to his Bramhmic blood and instinct felt called upon to read a long paper entitled "Abused India Vindicated" at the Grant Hall Club, Berhampur, in 1870. As the abuses no longer rain but pour on the same line and both from our own countrymen and outsiders as it used to do also in those days I quote here some expressions of his heart-felt sorrow at the uncharitable attacks on our institutions and practices—

'To vindicate India against the abuses lavishly heaped on her by friends and foes, by foreigners and natives, by the well-meaning through mistake or prejudice, and the ill-meaning through malice is a task which requires abilities of the highest order to accomplish and at the same time is charming enough to tempt the meanest of her sons to undertake.'

So you see, Jogesh, foreigners and natives have made a common cause in holding India up to the execration of the world since the rise of the sun in the West. Neither can you claim any originality for the demand that India should be a back-house of Europe and America. For, we find from the essay under notice that even in those days the cry that

India's 'sympathies now ought to lie with the West and not with her own past' was not less strident than what assails our ears to-day from the religious, political, social and economic platforms. The great Bramho Samaj leader, Pandit Shiva Nath Sastri complained in one of his latter day books that the face which was set towards the West by the pioneers of English education could not be turned homeward. In one of his fervent Bramho Samaj Anniversary sermons, he sighed for that magnificent faith of his grandmother who vowed her heart's blood to the village goddess in case of his recovery from a serious attack of dysentery and attended to that duty as the first and foremost of her works as soon as he convalesced. The old Bramhos, descendants of true Hindus as they are, were all sincerely religious men and though themselves professing their chosen phase of the comprehensive Hindu faith never withheld their tribute of respect to the intensely religious spirit of the whole Hindu race. Only the other day no less a devout Bramho than our venerable Krishna Kumar Mitra took the initiative in organizing a meeting to protest against the conduct of a civilian, a near relative of his, who entered a Hindu temple with shoes

on and wounded the religious susceptibilities of the local people. Krishna Kumar not only started a propaganda in his paper but presided at the meeting where the civilian was called upon by the public to tender an unqualified apology.

"Yes, sorcerer, *raid* and *hakim*—these were the three great killers of India's dark age and even our reformers sometimes fall a victim to the black art" exclaimed the neophyte to science.

But, youngman, do you know that Sir Herbert Risley, the great civilian and scholar, would have gone the same way as the ex-Lieutenant Governor Sir John Woodburn if he had not condescended to be treated by Kaviraj Vijoy Ratna Sen during the former's attack of chronic dysentery? Risley knew India and refused to die a martyr to "scientific bias", to use Spencer's famous phrase. Have you the stomach for what Sir Gooroodas says about Indian medicine? Sir Gooroodas was a mathematician, lawyer and judge and besides weighing his words before using them he always enthusiastically gave unto the West what was due to the West. So you can not trifle with his opinion for the one weakness of his being a

Bramhin. This is what he said in this connection :—

"Indian institutions and practices originated from Indian necessities (except in some rare cases) are expected to be better adapted to Indian society than foreign ones, if adopted without due modifications to suit the circumstances of the country. It is highly desirable therefore that our institutions and practices which *prima facie* appear to be so well-adapted to our own country should be closely examined in the light of modern science and their propriety or impropriety satisfactorily determined. Instead of doing this our educated youngmen and their instructors misled by the abuses heaped on everything that is Indian make easy work of the matter by crying down our institutions and practices as results of the superstition and ignorance which it will be unprofitable curiosity to enquire into. Take for instance the case of Medicine, a science which, by the way, is rising to importance daily for the spread of epidemics. And here my profane tongue must speak with diffidence under correction. It is an established fact that in complicated and chronic disorders English Medicines generally fail here and our Indian Medicines if resorted to effect wonderful cures. The study of Native Medicine is therefore a subject of the highest importance to our scientific medical men, but these instead of studying the subject, yield to the current abuses of the day and condemn Hindu Medicine as a system of absurdities of the sanguine, bilious and phlegmatic temperaments."

"But civilization has no patience with such *ipse dixit* and actually censured and disqualified

many an western-educated medical graduate for suspected sympathy with this quack system" was the warning administered by Jogesh.

But the universal whipping boy of New India is the Bramhin. He is everybody's *bele noire*. Even the best friends of Indian culture, both foreign and indigenous, can not stand him and are peremptory in their demand that his sacred thread should be used as the hang-man's rope.

The present-day Bramhins, of course, have many sins of omission and commission to account for. But in spite of their being regarded as the unmitigated nuisance of India they had some saving graces which arrested the attention even of their most malicious critics. The Bramhinic exclusiveness was intended for being fed from within to resist all hostile outside influences including even the fear of death. Even at the beginning of British rule death was disarmed of its sting to a Bramhin not altogether indifferent to temporal good. Macaulay, the greatest detractor of Indian culture and character, was constrained to emphasise this feature of the Bramhin's character while describing the trial of Nun-

comar. "Nuncomar prepared himself to die with that quiet fortitude with which the Bengalees so effeminately timid in personal conflict often encounter calamities for which there is no remedy * * * * Not a muscle of his face moved. Not a sigh broke from him. He put his finger to his forehead, and calmly said that fate would have its way, and that there was no resisting the pleasure of God.

* * * Nuncomar sat composedly down to write notes and examine accounts. * * * Nuncomar sat up in his palanquin and looked round him with unaltered serenity. He had just parted from those who were most nearly connected with him. Their cries and contortions had appalled the European ministers of justice, but had not produced the smallest effect on the iron stoicism of the prisoner. The only anxiety which he expressed was that men of his own priestly caste might be in attendance to take charge of his corpse. He again desired to be remembered to his friends in the council, mounted the scaffold with firmness and gave the signal to the executioner'.

"Yes, they are all wearing sacred threads not so much to improve themselves as to humiliate the Bramhins. But why should they

not altogether do away with this barbaric badge?" was the scientific demand of Jogesh.

My brother who is just coming from his native village says that the reformers have made it too hot for the Bramhins to live in the moffusil. How I wish that the Bramhins were self-respecting and instead of living under this long-standing charge of being a thorn in the side of progressive New India formed themselves into something like a co-operative society for the improvement of their own community and the acquisition of the necessary fitness for pursuing the ancient Hindu ideal. They should enter on a life of *tapasya* letting the society go its own way and effect the reforms that it thinks necessary for its all-round emancipation. The Bramhins should only see to this that they themselves are let alone and not affected by the changes introduced and contemplated. I think the number of Bramhins who believe in such isolation for the maintenance of the race-spirit are very small in every province and it is quite feasible to organize such an All-India Bramhinic federation both in their own interest as also that of the new nation which undoubtedly looks upon the Bramhins as a great stumbling-

block in the way of its progress. Vyasa enjoined such isolation and tapasya on Arjuna and the brothers when the latter's proven prowess and invincible bow could not stand him in good stead in defending the honour of the widows of Sri Krishna from the attack of the milkmen marauders when he was escorting them from Dwaraka to the Punjab, in obedience to Sri Krishna's last wish. I only ask the Bramhins to profit by the lessons of history and cultivate a Bramhinic forgiveness so that the fateful event over the insult of a Bramhin may not be repeated as in the case of King Parikshit. The present state of things in which the true Hindu ideal is being openly, collectively and triumphantly set at defiance by the present-day masters of the show so much resembles the deplorable chaos following the disappearance of Sri Krishna from the stage that it appears to be a distinct signal to the custodians of the old order of things to draw in their horns and decide a future course of action for the preservation of the race-spirit. Sir Gooroodas Banerjee also in his essay on "Abused India Vindicated" while gladly offering to replace Bramhinic religious supremacy by that of the

Sudra worked up his practical and judicial temper to all the fervour of which it was capable to plead for the retention of the purity of the 'crafty' Bramhin. I feel it necessary to reproduce the whole body of his weighty remarks in this connection :—

" This class or caste has been in existence since the time that our ancestors first settled in the Indian plain watered by the Sarasvati and Drisadvati and sang their immortal hymns to the God of nature. Earlier accounts of the world neither history records nor tradition relates. From these earliest times the Bramhans have preserved themselves uncontaminated physically as well as morally. Notwithstanding occasional deviations the Bramhans are a better class of men than any other race. *It grieves me much to hear it said that the crafty Bramhan has been the cause of India's misery.* Be it remembered however that it was these crafty Bramhans who have reared up a literature that will be the pride of India, for ages to come; it was they who by their peculiar religious institutions, have preserved the nationality of India, from being absorbed into Mahomedanism. If you have any respect for the past, if you are of an antiquarian spirit, if you approve of that spirit in which the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii are being so carefully preserved you will find that the Bramhin has something more than mere craft; you will see that he deserves praise more than blame and it grieves me more to see that the inconsiderate zeal of our educated countrymen should carry them so far as to seek to destroy that peculiar product of antiquity, the Bramhinical order.

Let the religious supremacy of the Bramhans be destroyed and let the Sudras rise high as they deserve and I would hail these results as extremely desirable. I would only wish, earnestly wish on purely social grounds, to preserve in its purity as long as we can an order which has resisted the shocks of time for six thousand years; an order every member of which can boast that no ancestor of his between himself and the rishis of Rigveda ever betook to low menial labour, an order the like of which no other country in the world can show. Renounce not then the sacred thread; for though stripped of its religious sanctity it is sacred still, it is hallowed by time—it is an honourable badge;—it is a badge of heraldry and peerage nobler and older than the noblest, and oldest peerage in the world.

“This is certainly an unctuous pronouncement” opined Jogesh.

A modern writer on Eugenics has said:—
 “Now whilst the accumulation of knowledge and art and power from age to age is real progress, it evidently depends for its stability and persistence upon the quality of the race. If the race degenerates—through, say, the selection of the worst for parenthood—the time will come when its heritage is too much for it. The pearls of the ancestral art are now cast before * * * * and are trampled on;—statues, temples and books are destroyed or burnt or lost.”

So at long last a scientific explanation is forthcoming for the prevailing contempt for our heritage. Be that as it may, let the dead past bury its dead is the policy which will now govern our conduct. Race-spirit must yield to the time-spirit"—that is how Jogesh formulated their present policy.

A man is said to be made by the company he keeps and I wonder how could there be such magnificent personalities as Ramdulal Sircar, Raja Radha Kanta Deb, Madanmohan Dutt, Lala Babu, and others living under the obnoxious shadow of the Bramhinic influence and maintaining a superstitious reverence for them.

'Yes, that has also been a baffling problem to me. You can not gather figs of thistles, they say, and how could a man like Ramdulal who is said to have enjoyed the unbounded confidence of the American, English and Chinese merchants be the product of superstitious, orthodox Hinduism? You always mention these names with becoming respect and must know a lot about Ramdulal. His life, I have been told, is worthy of a Plutarch's pen"—This was the embarrassing

position in which Jogesh was landed by the drift of the controversy.

'Let none admire riches grow in hell, for what else deserves that precious bane', so said the puritan poet of the *Paradise Lost*. But none can help admiring the manner in which Ramdulal acquired his riches and spent them. He was from his very birth a protected child, having seen the light in a trackless jungle when his parents were leaving the ancestral house at Dumdum under the Burgee menace. And from childhood to youth Ramdulal had to measure himself up against one misfortune after another till he was driven, by early orphanage, to the arms of his maternal grandfather in Calcutta, with a younger brother and sister. But begging was the only resource of his present guardians. His grandmother was a wonderful lady. She began revolving in her mind how she could share the burden of her husband in maintaining the unfortunate grandchildren and commenced paddy-husking in a neighbour's house. Almsgiving was at that time a bounden duty with every housewife and Ramdulal's grandmother on her way to the Ganges never forgot to take her quota of rice for the wayside mendicants.

After spending a few years in this way the lady somehow gained admittance to the house of the then pious millionaire of Hatkhola, Madan Mohan Dutt, as a cook and thus Ramdulal's sky cleared a little. The grandmother won the love and confidence of her employer's family by her excellent conduct and thus paved the way to Ramdulal's acquaintance and association with them. Madan Mohan was then almost the first rich man of Calcutta and used to feed hundreds of people everyday. So Ramdulal had no difficulty in beginning his education as a member of the noble Dutt family. Though in a position to avail himself of every facility he preferred pursuit of knowledge under difficulties and soon became proficient in the three R's to qualify himself for a job. After the necessary probation Ramdulal became Madan Mohan's ship-sirkar and by his uncommon business acumen learnt all about the transaction in sunken vessels. Here also he had his full share of difficulties and dangers. But he soon turned an expert in this line of business. Once he bought a sunken vessel which he knew to be a valuable thing from previous enquiries in his own name at an auction sale held at the time

for Rs. 14 thousand only and paid the sum out of the money of his master which he was then carrying on his person for some other purpose. As soon as the sale was completed an Englishman who had made up his mind to the purchase of the vessel turned up and learned to his great disappointment that the prize had passed into Ramdulal's hands. He was however not to be baulked of it and at once planked down one lac and fourteen thousand to get it from Ramdulal. Ramdulal was now master of a lac of rupees. But what did he do with this money which was beyond the dreams of avarice so far as he was concerned? He placed the whole amount before his master with the recital of the circumstances attending the purchase. Like servant like master. Madan Mohan considerably moved by the providential turn of the tide in favour of honest Ramdulal handed back the money to Ramdulal as legitimately belonging to him, telling him that he has sown and he must reap.

Madan Mohan then assured him that if he would thus exercise his exceptional business instinct unhampered by selfishness and greed then nothing could stand between him and success. Ramdulal then shed a few tears of

gratitude and accepted the money. This was the foundation of his fortune—the foundation of uncommon honesty—the outcome of the religion in which he was brought up and whose essentials he daily imbibed from the inspiring example of his poor grandmother. Ramdulal soon became a merchant of international reputation. He built up business after business and was the friend, guide and philosopher of the commercial people of the day. His American merchant friends presented him with an expensive oil-painting of President Washington. But with all his fortune, power and prestige Ramdulal was an ideal Hindu, simplicity personified. And with this Hindu unostentatiousness was associated the Hindu scale of charity and hospitality. Unnumbered were the persons who profited by his private beneficence. Some incidents of his spontaneous and princely benefactions read like the parables of the Mahabharat and other Puranas. Once the sight of countless ants feeding on the body of a dead pigeon led him to arrange for the entertainment of five hundred guests everyday in his gardenhouse of Belgachia. And the inspiration of all these good works came from his devotion to his gods and the Brahmins. In

those days there used to be regular competition in the race for honesty and straight dealing. Kristo Panthi of Ranaghat near Santipur who made his money out of his betel-leaf business, as we learn from the songs of the *Kali*-saint Ramprosad, had money transactions with Ramdulal. On one occasion Ramdulal's books showed that he owed fourteen thousand rupees to Kristo Panthi. But the entries in Kristo Panthi's books did not corroborate this debt, so he refused to take the money though the offer was repeatedly made by Ramdulal's men at their master's instance. At last Kristo Panthi pressed to be a party to what he considered misappropriation roared out in his village accents "Are then Dullya's books books, and my books mere dummies ?" So Dulal had to drop the matter. This was the record of Bengal even during the early years of the British rule. Can you then conscientiously disbelieve the Greek writer who has thus painted Hindu India :—

"They are remarkably brave, superior in war to all Asiatics; they are remarkable for simplicity and integrity, so reasonable as never to have recourse to a lawsuit and so honest as neither to require locks to their doors nor

writings to bind their agreements. No Indian was ever known to tell an untruth."

If there was ever any country under the sun entirely moulded by its religion it was Hindu India. It was a favourite saying with Swami Vivekananda that even the charka of the Punjab spinners hums "Adawitam."

This spirit may remain submerged for a time but it can never go out of existence.

Well, let *them* fight for all new rage,
 Or pleasure's shade pursue,
 The dweller in the land of sage
 Is fearless and careless too.
 Blow, spirit, by the lonely mound;
 And murmur, holy streams !
 There is no need of other sound
 To soothe India's dreams.

WOMAN OF INDIA.

Woman of India ! Thou art still the ruler of India. Still capable of giving birth to the old wealth of life, rich and reproductive. Still determined to make it flow in the channel where alone it can function and fructify. Thou understandest our scientist that 'the efflorescence of life is the gift of the place'. Knowledge may not have grown from more to more, but more of reverence in thee dwells. And where reverence is, the spring of life has not failed. Art thou the potter's clay which man can mould and manipulate any way he likes ? Let Miss Mayo answer in her 'true stories'. She appears again on the stage to unroll a fresh film, to exhibit 'the degraded souls of India' and to sicken the world with a drab and disgusting sight. Nothing can exhaust the perennial waters of her bitterness of heart against India. Again she gathers them all and tries to produce the most pestilential picture. She taxes her imagination to the utmost, she summons all her so-called literary resources, she collects all the hideous and horrible colours. But lo and behold !

out of the conspiracy of all the conceivable criminalities on her canvas, there springs a violet and she alone lies howling. Even against the back-ground blackened by the Mayo type of malice, thou, Oh Indian woman, yet sittest the queen of India, enthroned, if you please, on the cruelty of customs and meanness of men. Miss Mayo trifles with the slaves of the gods and the gods pay her in her own coin.

India has advanced ! Advanced considerably indeed in the direction of denationalization. She has made gigantic progress steering clear of all such rocks as religion and idealism.

The old order changeth, yielding place to new
And God fulfils himself in many ways
Lest one old nonsense should corrupt India.

Money is now the master force, the Almighty dollar of Miss Mayo's motherland. It makes and mars all movements. It creates impulse and determines pace. An honest love of the pleasurable things of the world is better than all the creeds of the world. This is the new gospel. Even Buckle has been surpassed. Earthly happiness, material standard is the one only sun on the new horizon. The old wisdom has been cast to the void as the most

fatal fetter. Gods and goddesses have no place in the temple of the heart and that is how and where their desecration really begins though apparently in external aggressive iconoclasm. The Indian woman mainly still defends the ashes of her fathers and the temple of her gods by her holy thoughts and conduct. Miss Mayo has rightly named her the slave of the gods. That is what she is. That is how she has maintained her "secret freedom of the soul" as she herself phrases it in her very first story. This slavery alone ensures the survival of the fittest and not that formula of natural selection as understood in the west. Ages before the glimpse of natural selection visited any civilised cranium, the Mother of India thus promulgated her message in the Devi Sukta :—'Him, whom I want to preserve I make the strongest of all, the creator, the seer of the unseen, the exceptionally intelligent'. This is what natural selection means in the light of the Vedas. Does not history also point the same moral and adorn the same tale through her Caesars and Kaisers? The Indian woman has been thus naturally selected to keep the race-spirit of India in its natural alignment. Amidst all these changes, she stands the symbol of the changeless. Time has

not staled or tamed her invincible spirit. Yet she is original and no brummagem imitation. Slave of the gods but master of men and circumstances. That is what she has achieved through this self-determined and self-determining slavery. The same sweet, simple, pliable soul, but when the real pride of woman is touched even her enemy is bound to exclaim 'Take her for all in all, here is a woman with the making of a Sita or Savitri, the type of Jephtha's daughter who sacrificed herself for her father's honour'. That is what Miss Mayo has shown in all her stories. Kamala, Urmila, Sita, Lakshmi have all triumphantly proved the race even at her foul hands. They have emerged glorious from her filthy and fantastic treatment. As the exigencies of her black art could not efface a single line from the traditional lineament she can certainly stand the surety and guarantee for the future India. Miss Mayo came to scoff and remains to pray. I shall make out my case by examining all the principal stories one by one.

Kamala Devi, a lotus on dung-hill, as the Bengali saying goes, was born in the Mahomedan Punjab of the North. Other particulars about the when and where of her appearance

have been withheld probably not to spoil the truthful look of the story. Her father though loving her as a son had to sacrifice her to his caste-prejudice and in order to save himself from the jaws of hell threw his girl into the jaws of an undesirable husband except from the caste point of view. And this sacrifice was arranged before her second birth-day. She was under her father's roof till a little before her eighth year when the summons came from her sick husband who required 'the use of her clean child body' to get rid of the illness, according to 'the promise of the ancient code'. As arranged between Providence and Miss Mayo the husband died and Kamala became an ill-used Hindu widow in a Hindu joint family which, of course, means a hive of drones, to paraphrase Miss Mayo's well-informed fling at it. Seventeen relatives-in-law made her the target of all manner of violence, the mother-in-law, of course, having taken the presidential chair. In the meantime, Kamala stepped on her twelfth year which brought 'achieved womanhood' and her 'new beauty' attracted 'the eye of desire' of her husband's eldest brother Kishan who was bound, according to the logic of things, to be a dirty, foul, old man

broken by disease. Though such a marriage was allowed by the caste custom and the whole family, turning in a pack, hounded her to consent, Kamala's 'very marrow recoiled from the thought of Kishan's touch'. She refused to be so much clay in the hand of the potter or as so much dirt under foot as a girl-wife and a girl-widow in India are generally painted to be. With all Miss Mayo's vigilance over this 'slave of the gods', with caste and religious ban ever at work to repress her, with the malice of a whole Hindu family relentlessly pursuing this poor girl widow, she somehow maintained 'the secret freedom of her soul'. 'Somehow in spite of starvation and drudgery' beauty too did not refuse the girl her magic touch. Miss Mayo could surreptitiously transfer the filth of her own mind to the 'ancient code' but the beauty of Kamala's body and soul survived all her vile story-making tricks. She knew not that she was dealing with a 'slave of the gods' who lives on manna and vibrates to the star even though a cruel Hindu mother-in-law keeps her on the scant hard food of the Hindu widow's fare salted with unsayable words and sets her to stick cow-dung cakes on the wall. So tenderly

preserved by the gods neither the fire nor the fight went out of her. Led on by the fire within she conceived the determination of being a *sati*. Can't say if it was in the year of grace 1929 to suit Miss Mayo's convenience. Kamala came back from the river duly bathed and 'in such form as the law commands' and startled the whole household by the declaration :—'Before this sun-down I shall be *sati*. To the holy gods I have vowed it.' The whole atmosphere changed, even the harpy of the Mother-in-law turned her curse into blessing and began to caress with her claws. She read the soul behind her eyes and was satisfied that she would 'hold firm.' Miss Mayo now heard her congratulating herself and the whole house on this bright turn of events in the following words :—Blessed be this Day of Days, that restores to my son his bride ! Blessed be this Day of Days, that confers high honour upon all my family ! Blessed be this Day of Days, that exalts me among all women for suttee shall be done to the glory of our house !

Kamala was then dressed and decked with her own and borrowed jewellery, carried in a royal procession to an out-of-the-way garden ghat and stretched on the sacred sacrificial

bed. Throughout the grim preparation she behaved as if she were not of the flesh. This is the gist of Miss Mayo's pathetic description of her last state amidst the smoke and flame. Thus expired a 'slave of the gods' amidst the rejoicing shouts of an admiring village. The village headman though ready with his own excuse for throwing dust in the eyes of the *sahib* who has forbidden *sati* softly murmured 'Still for our Hindu people it was surely a great and most holy festival, and for our village an honour, now too rare that abideth for ever, blessed of the gods.'

The mother-in-law was armed with the defence—a fact which the gods had withheld from Miss Mayo's ears—that she had a dream that Kamala in one of her numerous previous births was Paulina, the wife of Seneca who opened her own veins in order to accompany her husband to the grave but was somehow saved to the great joy of the Romans who ever after observed with reverence the sacred pallor of her countenance—the memorial of her act. This is the secret how Kamala's 'secret freedom of the soul' could survive the dread lot of a Hindu girl-widow. Miss Mayo may write another book on this text.

Babu Ram Das, a Hindu money-lender, one of the rascally lot, 'timid as hares, cunning as jackals, greedy as the grave' who stole in from the South and made lodgment in Islampur, a saint-established city on the Southern Afghan Frontier of 'that idolatrous country now called India'. It, of course, goes without saying that the bania could spoil whole Islampur only in this Age of the British when Hindu-baiting ceased with Pax-Brittanica—a fact extremely relevant to the purpose of the story! Ram Das poulticed all the shameful injuries received at the hands of the Mahomedans with layers of gold and began to drive a roaring money-lending trade extorting interest at seventy five percent and up. He had an annoying trifle in the form of a girl daughter named Urmila. Urmila was a motherless child and her father continued a widower as both caste and cost stood in the way of a second marriage. Little Urmila drooped and pined in the dark back chamber of the house under the care of an old aunt Sarojini whom God made half-deaf, half-blind, full-sleepy and what not to serve Miss Mayo's mission. But in her girl heroines the law of natural selection does not at all work and far from being crushed by the most horrible

environment which her excellent literary resources conceive for them, they show an invincible spirit. In Urmila too there was this spirit — 'a baby courage and discontent' that spurred her to rebellion after rebellion. The first rebellion was against the nasty little gods, she was asked to pray to. Miss Mayo had got her a Mahomedan friend, guide and philosopher in one Hanifan, a faggot-seller of the place who taught her all the good things of Islam. Her aunt was anxious to get her a husband but the father only minded his seventyfive percent. and up. But Miss Mayo has friends everywhere who come to her rescue whenever in a scrape. Ram Das once heard the Hindu gossips of the bazar conspiring to outcaste him for putting off his daughter's marriage even after her twelvth year, when an exceptional beauty stole upon her face notwithstanding her blood-curdling surroundings, deaf, blind aunt, and monster of a father. Ram Das shaken out of his callousness towards his daughter by the gossips' threat began to revolve in his mind the idea of his daughter's marriage. Of course the first step was to scold Urmila for not having killed herself to save her father the cost of her marriage. Urmila wanted to relieve his anxiety by doing as the girls of

Islam do, that is, marrying late. This blasphemy whetted his keen wit and he conceived the idea of a magnificent bargain out of his daughter's marriage. There was Keshab Dutt, the jeweller, aged sixty and afflicted with ancient rheums and agues. He has plenty of cash and he must pay through the nose if a clever fellow could talk him into it by setting 'his thin blood apounding with hot desire.' Miss Mayo is a pastmaster in the art of making her old male characters hectic with hot desire. A straight appeal was made to Keshab Dutt's 'hot desire' and he consented to purchase Urmila with three thousand rupees. Her father before starting on a seven days' business tour imparted the welcome news to Urmila telling her how her would-be husband would decorate her from head to foot with jewellery. Urmila in the meantime coaxed her aunt to take her to the bazar. When near the jewellery shops Urmila began her artful enquiry for Keshab Dutt's shop and her eyes were repelled by a 'lean, old, longfanged, bare-bones, all crooked and hairy like a poison spider on the wall.' Like recognises like. A poison spider from across the Atlantic is weaving out of herself the most poisonous cobweb and calls it truth in a fiction

form and the civilized world shouts encore. But she is pursued by one fatality in the guise of forgetfulness. The very personification of inconsistency, prejudice and malice that she is, the Indian girls shine out of her grimy hands with an individual splendour which the wicked religion, most inhuman social customs and the accumulated superstitions of the country of their birth could hardly have made for. Or it may be a case of the gods first making those mad whom they wish to use as the unconscious agents of self-stultification to serve a big world-purpose, namely, proving the influence of a true religion on the motherhood that brings forth a spiritual race. Urmila, the daughter of a bania whose whole affection has been set on money and who is up to anything to feed his greed was consigned to the care of a deaf, blind aunt neck-deep in the foul superstition and tradition of Hinduism. All the cruel customs of the land combined to crush the proud woman in her. How is it then that Urmila and Kamala survived all the horrors of their surroundings and got their due from an un-sexed American lady vowed to most implacable enmity to their motherland ? In India the old religion is still observed by her woman-

hood. They are both its product and protector and a religion that has surrounded the motherhood of the race with such unapproachable halo though there has been age-long darkness all around, can claim to have a meritricious civilization wise in its own conceit as a humble learner at its feet. That is what Miss Mayo is out to prove through the child heroines of her admittedly fiction-faced stories.

Hear now what Urmila decides to do after sighting the poison spider, and how blind malice plays its nasty tricks with Miss Mayo's far-famed, fiction-faking faculty. Urmila, we have been told, could not look upon the nasty little Hindu gods as they hurt her eyes. Besides, she was taught to hate Hinduism with all her heart. But after she had recovered from her terrible shock at the sight of the abominable poison spider, a keen young Mahomedan fighting man was the first object that met her eyes and she addressed him as her young Lord Krishna. This Lord Krishna was one Mahomedan Khan, son of Sher Ali Khan, with whom she at once fell in love. Incidentally Urmila was taught a little true religion as the young Khan corrected her description of their mosque not as the temple of the gods but

as the house of the one *God*. Then what followed is out-romancing even her romance of hatred: She conceived a desire to avenge herself on the gods of the household. One by one she took them in her hands, cuffed them, soundly, scandalously and stood them on their head in the dust. Not content with that, she began to harangue them :—"I hate you, I hate you etc". Now this is evidently Miss Mayo herself cuffing and cudgelling the Indian gods as she wants, in her heart of hearts, to do. But here she does this Urmila a terrible wrong. Her baby courage and spirit did not certainly cast her in the mould of a coward and a mad coward at that. Then after chastising the gods she descended into the street and straightway ran to the mosque. There again she met the lord of her heart and addressed him in the following words :— "I come on, lord, to seek the god if perchance he will have my soul and save it from those foul gods that give little girls to spider." That is all right. But whom is India to go to to save the reputation of her girls from this trans-Atlantic poison spider? Two days after, an agent of Sher Ali Khan, the great Afridi chieftain, came to Urmila's father, Ram Das and informed him of his mission in these

choice words :—"Hark, ye Ram Das, old swine that thou art and child-killer. The child thou hadst is thine no more, she is the affianced bride of my son Mahomed Khan." Then he told him further that he had hundred rifles in his towered fortress for teaching his idolatry a good lesson if he dared to speak anything against this soul-saving arrangement. Ram Das begged his life and peace and made his surrender to the one God of Mahomed Khan. This rifle-backed one God of Miss Mayo has so much pandered to her unwomanly taste that she does not feel called upon to keep even a civil tongue within her head in dealing with Indian women. Let the world choose between Urmila's many gods and Miss Mayo's one God.

A shabby little women's hospital buried in the heart of an ancient Bengali city. Two martyrs, Janet Hanock, Surgeon Superintendent and her assistant Ruth Knox. Two true disciples of the new lady with the lamp, inordinately ambitious of playing her part in a race-Crimea. Both have worn themselves to bones with an

incessant round of abnormal maternity cases. But the soul is more vexed than the body. Hourly witness of the tortured flesh of helpless children, miscalled wives, heavens would fall if they told half they knew ; but not a little finger raised except their own 'bird-claw' ones, the Government, the Police, nay, the whole Western world, snoring, as the Bengali saying goes, with oil in their nose over the shrieks of the girl-wives daily done to death by the brutality of their husbands. The *bara* Miss and the *chota* Miss are in the midst of the solemn discussion that "the dungeons of the Hindu women are built of fear—built of their own thought, built of tradition, of despair, of ignorance that better things exist (presumably in America as disclosed by Judge Lindsay)—built even of pride in their very slavery. So they are past praying for." When they were thus salving their terribly troubled conscience, lo and behold ! there appear before them two denizens of the dungeon—a Hindu woman leading a little girl. The woman found words after half an hour overwhelmed as she was with the sense of deliverance at the very sight of the Miss who 'carries the blessings of God in her hands.' After recovering self-

possession she thus puts her case: "It is her littleness, her littleness that will undo us all, her age is not yet upon her, but her husband demands her. The husband, a money-lender who lives just yonder in that big house rising so tall above the rest, a great and violent man used to be obeyed and satisfied. The girl goes to her husband tomorrow. The mother-in-law has used the fulness of her wisdom, and with her 'hard-wrung consent' the girl is brought 'to the feet of this' 'Gracious presence', 'Succourer of Women'. The *Vaid* has worked his best and though the child is already weak from pain and bleeding, still she remains too small, too small."

The Miss was approached to remove this curse of littleness. The Surgeon Superintendent Janet Hanock reads the mother a sermon, implicating mainly her husband, an important man 'sitting in seats of honour upon ceremonial occasions,' holding forth eloquently on the evils of child-marriage in splendid speeches and 'facing facts' in the case of his own girl-daughter. With this sharp and crisp rebuke she sent the mother about her business, refusing 'to perform an operation that would complete the ruin that they at home have most horribly begun'.

Then the curtain rises on the concluding scene. The sharp, high, quivering cry of a child in agony rouses Janet from her sound mid-night sleep, nature's sweet restorer of over-worked body and mind. A crowd of Indian men was pouring from every door and alley into the road. Janet and Ruth, their hearts heaving high up to the throat at that accustomed quivering cry, somehow covered themselves and plunged as two sleep-walkers into the crowd and got at the centre of the throng. Two men hurried away with a child into a house, the doctor Miss sahibs, of course, following them. The men laid their burden on the floor in the inner courtyard and a little, frail girl, scant ten years old, neck broken, shocked the two doctors as they bent over her for examination. As there was nothing to do they gave a hypodermic and awaited the end. Then a faint sound from the form on the floor and life passed. Now it was the turn of Hari Babu, the master of the house in which the girl expired to enlighten Janet on what had actually happened. Hari Babu who knew doctor Miss Sahib to be a great friend of India thus poured out his confidence :—

"It appears that this girl is the new wife of our neighbour, the money-lender and this night he first took her home. It appears she could not have pleased him. It appears also that his aphrodisiacs must have been a little over-exciting for to throw her out of his window—his really very extremely high window—was indiscreet. . . . We Hindus permit no man to know the secrets of our zenana. Our wives are our own property. None may ask concerning them, friend or foe, nor challenge the husband's rights. Should the police then profane our sacred zenanas, lifting the veil? Oh! we are a patient folk, but the day that shame attacks us, your world and ours will run with blood."

Truth or fiction? Truth can not be so treacherous to truth about the modest sex. Fiction has also fought shy of such flaunting filth. Fiction has never poured forth such stinking pitch. Utter indelicacy writ large on every line and staring one dead. Proverbially pure purdah ladies not unoften preferring death to medically aided child-birth, described in literature as unseeable by the sun, thus murdering their native modesty and advertising their disgrace and shame!

When the great Consent Bill agitation during the Viceroyalty of Lord Lansdowne first opened the eyes of the Hindu public to the fact that there could be such serious abuses of the marital right in the Hindu community when there are specific and compulsory ceremonies more important than that of marriage itself ushering in its consummation, the late B. M. Malabari of social reform fame had only one trump card in his hand, the Hari Maity case, hailing from an obscure corner of Hooghly, to peg on. The whole of Hindu Calcutta assembled in the Maidan for an anti-demonstration and mounted sergeants streamed out from the Government House to whip into its head the viceregal message 'the preposterous parrot cry of religion in danger shall no more stay the hand of common morality.' Much water has since flowed under the Hooghly bridge. Western civilisation has now penetrated the palace and cottage without a single exception and swept the old offending Hindu from all possible hiding places. Reform organisations have sprung up like mushrooms ferretting out all the sins of omission and commission of unregenerate Hinduism and moving even the Legislatures to weave out Penal prohibitions

with which Hinduism might cover its recreant limbs and no more ache the eyes of the Western friend. But when the noon-day sun of reform is thus blazing overhead and the colossus of rationalism is advancing with gigantic strides making the pigmies of God, Religion and the Priest peep about for an underground retreat, Janet and Ruth, if Hari Babu is to be believed, are administering hypodermic to the dying girl-victim of a high class Bengali votary of Aphrodite carrying the up-to-date blessings of science in her hand, in the heart of an ancient city of Bengal, the province which first received the boon of Western culture !

Do not this girl and her mother belong to the race of Kamala and Urmila ? As they are undoubtedly of that stuff how can she consistently drag them into this unspeakably dirty secretion of her own diseased brain ? Of course there is her resourceful mind from which there is no escape. 'How oft the possession of means to do ill deeds, makes deeds ill done'. And here is a member of the softer sex, by hand of nature marked, quoted and signed to do a deed of shame. But that is cold comfort to Hari Babu, who must really transfer his allegiance to the gods if he wants to be saved.

Sita. The name, the charm to conjure with, in the Hindu world. Miss Mayo has chosen this name of inviolable sanctity for the young Hindu widow whom she feigns to chaperon though herself a spinster. The Hindu mind trembles to think how this widow who has placed herself beyond the reach of all interested misunderstanding and malignity by being named Sita has fared in her harpy hands. For she is verily the modern Medea, pledged to the Jason of Imperialism to help him to carry off the golden fleece of the milder peoples and asperse in his interest the very apex of feminine evolution—the womanhood of India. Neither is it far out in its apprehension. For this Hindu widow has been made the coward's cat's paw to pounce upon all our cherished Institutions and ideals from the temple priest to Gandhi. Her invitation of the horror of the world upon the gruesome widow's picture—"Her fleshless cheek, drawn like a mummy's, exposing the contour of her teeth, her short cropped hair which instead of being black is coarse and grizzled grey, each tendon of her little hands standing out alone, her great dark eyes staring a void, eyes of a doomed animal that having exhausted both pain and fear knows there is

no hope" is calculated to boil even a frog's blood. Then she thus speaks of the status of the Hindu widow in the society and in her own household:—

"Then Bimal (Sita's husband) died, because of the sins of Sita, his wife. What sins? In vain through succeeding years she had sought to discover them. They belonged to some former incarnation, of which the gods had wiped her memory clean.

But if a man dies, is it not always because of the sins of the wife who survives him? Wherefore she walks justly accursed of all orthodox Hindudom, a slave, rightless thing of evil omen, till death releases the earth of her weight.

Obeying the explicit Hindu code, they had taken away her marriage token, had cut off her long black hair and shaved her head, had stripped her of all her jewels and her clothing. Then clad in a single mantle—a sari of white cotton cloth—widow's wear—they had turned her into the street to beg. In which they, the rightful heirs, while saving to themselves all Bimal's hoard, did but emphasize the verdict of high Destiny."

This is what Miss Mayo's vulture eye so fond of feasting on fancied garbage has spied out as the attitude of the Hindu household and society towards the child-widow. But here is the testimony of one who, though born in the West, was really possessed of an eastern soul, a noble English woman of extraordinary intellect, learning and spiritual elevation, who understood India far better than the Indians themselves and whose enthusiastic appreciation was the result of long-continued intimate association with the very women of whom she writes. Sister Nivedita who lived in a house of her own in the most orthodox of the Indian quarters of Calcutta, and ate, slept and conducted a girl school there and had full welcome accorded her at any hour of day or night that she might choose to invade the privacy of a group of women friends hard by thus pens in her inimitable style, born of the power to look into the very heart of things, her experience of what a freshly widowed daughter means to the family of her father.

"An incomparable moment in the history of a Hindu family is that of the return to it of a young daughter freshly widowed. Unspeakable tenderness and delicacy are lavished

on her. A score of reasons for the mitigation of her rule are thought out and urged. In spite of her reluctance, the parents or parents-in-law will insist. Sometimes the whole family will adopt her austere method of living for a few months, and keep pace with her self-denials. step by step, till she herself discovers and breaks the spell. 'Well, well'! exclaimed an old father brooding over the ruin of his child's happiness at such a crisis, 'it was high time for me to retire from the world; can we not renounce together, little mother?' And while she is supported by her father's strong arm, the mother's wings are open wide, to fold closer than ever before the bird that has flown home with the arrow in its heart. Indeed, this union of theirs has become proverbial, so that if some small son be uncommonly helpful and chivalrous to his mother, friendly neighbours will say, in banter: 'But this is no boy! This is surely your widowed daughter, mother!' So pass the years, till, it may be the mother, herself widowed, becomes as a child, falling back upon the garnered strength of her own daughter. Life ebbs: but discipline gathers its perfect fruit, in lives stately and grave and dignified, for all their simplicity

and bareness; in characters that are the hidden strength alike of village and of nation; in an ideal of sainthood justified; an opportunity of power created. In the long years of her mature life we picture the Madonna standing always beneath the Cross. And we are right. But patience! not for ever shall she stand thus. It shall yet come to pass that in high heaven a day shall dawn, on which wearing the self-same meekness, clothed in self-same humility, the Mother of Sorrows shall be crowned—and that by her own Son!”

This is what she says about the attitude of her husband's parents to the girl-widow.

“And yet her *natural longing*, in the first days of her widowhood, is to remain, unless forbidden by his poverty, in the household of her father-in-law, for herein lies all her loyalty to the dead. Nay, it will often happen that even a child-widow is anxiously retained by her husband's parents, as a token, in some sort, left by him who is gone. All the glory of womanhood lies in such things as these.”

Nothing is mentioned in this story about Sita's parents when she became a widow. Yet we were told at the outset that ‘she prayed for a husband, laying her little offerings of toys or

fruits or flowers before the shrine. And in due season the husband had been procured, from the proper caste circle not without payment of much money in dowry.' Her parents as they had married her after payment of much money in dowry could not have been so bad as not to have taken any notice of their widowed daughter. This point has been deliberately suppressed as the one object of all these stories is to blackguard the men of India as the persecuters of women, as she herself assures the women of Hindu India, that one of her objects of writing *Mother India* was to awaken the conscience of men who, according to her, are primarily responsible for this state of things.

The affection of Indian parents for their daughters is proverbial, sometimes bordering on weakness. The Hindu mother's heart always yearns for her daughter and it literally breaks when she is a widow. The unmarried daughter is the greatest pet of the family. She in her turn runs errand for every member not even the servant excepted. Whoever may require anything first calls to this girl who is here, there and everywhere, attending the mother in the kitchen, helping the father in doffing his garments, answering a brother's call for a glass

of water, keeping her eye on any guest or new-comer, the very little Nell of every Hindu family. Dickens knew only one Nell, but every Hindu household has its little Nell. And nobody is so much loved and liked by every one of the family as this girl angel. She is verily the apple of every eye. No father spares himself to see her well-placed in life. There is a pathetic ceremony on the last day of a daughter's marriage which even the most obdurate father has not been known to pass through without the severest wrench in the heart. When this farewell ceremony is arranged and the daughter gets ready to receive her parents' blessings on the eve of starting for her new home she takes a handful of mole-hill earth and asks the father to accept it in full payment of the debt she had incurred for her keep. Few fathers have been known not to have broken down on this occasion. Even the great ascetic *Kanna* had succumbed to this sweet weakness when bidding farewell to his adopted girl *Shakuntala* and loudly expressed the opinion : "when even an ascetic like me who have cut off all ties with the world is so overwhelmed with grief in giving an adopted daughter a send-off to her new home, small wonder that this first pang

of separation is almost unbearable for a householder." So the Hindu parents' affection for their daughter is not a whit abated after the daughter's marriage, but is, on the contrary, gradually increased by greater and greater calls on it during the daughter's wedded life. And verily, as Sister Nivedita has said, an incomparable moment in the history of a Hindu family is that of the return to it of a young daughter freshly widowed. The daughter returns with a royal insignia for a throne in the esteem of the whole family, because of the spiritual life that then lies before her. She revolutionises the whole atmosphere; virtues then dog her footsteps and the very moral tone of the whole family is raised. The widow herself grows in serene beauty both of body and soul. The outer self-expression of the inner beauty then comes to be a matter of special notice. A young widow of India—a lean, lank, full-flayed, socket-eyed, tendon-ridden skeleton, grinning out its teeth on the walls of a medical museum—that is the Mayo-painted picture! Do the eyes that bring a higher hope for a whole family, speak of no hope for herself? Decency shrieks, truth blushes, justice jibs! Look at this picture and that by Sister Nivedita

and as she happens to be. See what a grace is seated on this brow; Hyperion's curls, the front of *Mahadev* himself shooting forth its prism of fire to burn up Eros: eyes like Mar's to threaten and command; a beauty like that of India's lust-proof lotus full-blown on a soft moss-green velvet :—

A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a woman.

The true Hindu is really a slave of the gods so far as marriage is concerned. The souls that are united before the eyes of the gods on the day of the betrothal cannot be separated when either of the bodies dissolves. It may sound grotesque in the modern ear. It is no doubt arrant *nonsense* to those with whom consciousness is a concomitant of the grey matter of the brain and cannot persist when the latter is burnt down or mingled with dust. But Hinduism had quite other visions and values. When after the terrible battle of *Kurukshetra*, the innumerable bereaved wives of the Kuru dynasty rent the welkin with their cries, Vyash assured them that their husbands were all alive in the other world and for soothing their inconsolable grief

arranged for a momentary reunion. The tradition has since been strengthened and incorporated into the ever-expanding consciousness of the race through subsequent experience and realisation and cannot be so easily got rid of as an intolerable relic of the old silly superstition to make room for the new wardrobe of science. With the Hindu, Laodamias have neither been few nor far between. Hinduism sinks or swims, stands or falls with these basic principles; and as long as there is the unerring intuition of a single solitary Hindu who lives and realises the truths of his religion to grant their charter of life to these principles a so-called science may lay siege to their citadel but shall neither storm nor raze it to the ground. Lo! science is now coming to the aid of faith. So, for the Hindu couple there can be no break in the marriage though the more important partner may be in the other world. His memory is to be treasured up, honoured and worshipped and graven in the heart. The married Hindu woman cannot even touch the *Shalgram Sila* of the family as that is unfaithfulness to her own husband and lord. Whether such beliefs and consciousness made for the elevation or degradation of womanhood is to be judged from these

avowals in the appeal issued to the woman of India in the concluding chapter of "Slaves of the Gods" :—

"For centuries past your natural intelligence, sagacity and devotion have been acclaimed, while instances of your personal courage have at times amazed the world. Your mothers mounted the funeral pyre to serve their dead lords, you daughters, once you hear the call, will face more protracted suffering, if that must be to save your sons".

"Out of the subjection in which for ages you have lived, you have drawn one great prize, you have been disciplined. Discipline gives mental and moral strength ; that strength you now possess far in excess of your men. That strength you must now use in your sons' behalf."

So the strength of our women is far in excess of our men. Why will they then stoop to be the sport of their base passion? With the sense of the invisible always strong and active they have known one only pole star in life. They never consent to any thing base. We the de-Hinduised men of India may have come to believe in flesh and blood as the last word of a short-sighted, conceited,

culture. But that is no reason why we should bark at the moon of immaculate Hindu widowhood which still sheds its serene light from the three-quarters darkened firmament. Few, few shall fall where many meet but snow is still their winding sheet. These few also are redeemed by the excellences of the virtuous many. Small wonder that Sita acquits herself as a Sita "though she has been turned into the street clad in a single mantle—a sari of white cotton cloth—widow's wear." But driven desperate by the failure to discover the slightest spot on her effulgent widowhood, Malice casts its longing lingering look behind at her short married life to discover its appropriate food. Sita was the fifth wife of her husband—'a bigger, older and fatter man than her father.' He married her in order that she might bear him a son. But when she bore no fruit and there was the danger that the master might discard such a tree and set another in its place, she went at the instance of her husband to the temple of Kali to beg of her a son that will save the soul of her husband from hell. All day in the temple she besought the goddess and at night, as her husband had ordered her, "filled with fear she lay where the priest bade her in a dark place

apart." "Had you a dream in the night season?" the priest enquired when morning came. "Not a dream but a strong presence that visited me," she had answered, "and the voice of the Presence was like the voice of my lord priest." Now where has a story-teller fed on such habitual diet of dirt? No, the Indian woman knows only of one presence to whom she clings both in life and death and who bends over her his benign eyes from the other world and keeps her straight. That is the meaning of her unbroken widowhood at whatever age it may happen to her. That is the meaning of the renunciation which causes even the star to envy its purity. The detractors of the slaves of the gods may dream of multiplying presences helped by the law of divorce and call it chivalry and civilisation. Hindu obscurantism is not yet a party to it, shoals of reformers notwithstanding. Sita is said to have had another great trouble. Her women friends put it into her head that there is a disease that can eat their bodies with sores and the horror of flesh so defaced haunted her till Gandhi's men cursed her with the curse of leprosy unless she gave up her Manchester-made sari and thus drove her into her hut whence she tore off the same and threw it into the

strangers' hands. It was the dread of this disease which at last caused her to hang herself. From the cursed cult of Hindu widowhood to that of the 'new-made saint' Gandhi is a short step. But, by the by, why should this widow of all others constantly pray for a body clean, uncankered and undefiled, terror-struck by the vision of a foul disease? This is evidently a case of shifting one's own oppressive burden of fear on to a perfectly innocent shoulder. Mr. Lecky, the great historian of European Morals explains to us the secret of this transference trick. In Miss Mayo's highly civilized countries which are asked to take charge of the morals of depraved India, the dread of the disease by which the poor widow of the story is said to have been haunted might justifiably exist in some quarters. We are told :—

"The existence in * * * * of unhappy women, sunk in the very lowest depths of vice and misery, and numbering certainly not less than fifty thousand, shows sufficiently what an appalling amount of moral evil is festering uncontrolled, undiscussed, and unalleviated, under the fair surface of a decorous society. In the eyes of every physician and indeed in the eyes of most continental writers who have

and a vast proportion of those whose reputations and lives have been blasted by one momentary sin, are hurled into the abyss of habitual prostitution—a condition which, owing to the absence of public opinion and the neglect of legislators, is in no other European country so hopelessly vicious or so irrevocable.”

Evil there is everywhere, sometimes thriving side by side with good. The dark drab piece of coke we kick aside has its congener in the precious diamond trembling on a queen's forehead. We, each of us, carry so much evil within us. “No sincere man,” as an expounder of modern science and modern thought says, “looking into the depths of his own soul, or of the facts of the world around, can doubt that along with much that is good, generous, wise and right there is much that is bad, foolish and wrong.” Both Plato and Aristotle were of opinion that man by the very constitution of his mind cannot follow an ideal to its logical consequence. Before the problem of evil all flippant speculation must pause. Those who really reform evil and are capable of doing it approach the question with such a supreme sense of its inevitability in the scheme of things and an attendant feeling of excruciating pain.

at human ignorance and helplessness in the matter that even the footstool of the Highest is shaken by the awful sincerity and grace descends to raise up the faith that falters. Whoever has seriously approached the question must have felt like the poet

"I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares,
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,
I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope."

Only the Indian saint who possesses a more intimate knowledge of his God and stands to him in the realised relation of mother and son, lover and beloved, master and the pet servant, addresses his God as if he was in the know so far as this problem of evil is concerned. Tukaram, the great Marhata saint, a harbinger of the spiritual renaissance which was soon followed by an all-round renaissance thus addresses his God in this connection :—"That we fall into sin is thy good fortune; we have bestowed name and form on thee; had it not

been we who would have asked after thee, when thou wast lonely and unembodied. It is the darkness that makes light shine, the setting that gives lustre to the gem. Disease brought to light *Dhanantary*. Why should a healthy man wish to know him? It is poison that confers its value on necton. Gold or brass are high or low compared with each other. Tuka says "Know this, O God ! that because we exist Godhead has been conferred on you." So the sinful mortal sends up his cry in the sorest agony of heart and God has to prove to him His power and presence. What do we understand of His *maya*? We stand aghast and paralysed before the infinite play of His making, preserving and breaking power and He sounds in our ear the reassuring message 'never mind if this manifesting *maya* of mine appears to you uncrossable ; come to me and you will be able to cross it'. Our widows go to Him and He enables them to cross the tempestuous ocean of *maya* which so frightens us. In how many houses have we seen that though round her breast the roaring clouds are spread eternal sunshine settles on the widow's head. The widows of India bear the cross for their fallen country. They are the promise and guarantee of our

future. Fling mud right and left but spare our widows.

Lakshmi, the beautiful little daughter of a poor Brahmin widow, was seven years old. Her mother was very ill and anxious thought about the future of the girl troubled her most. A *sahib doctor-lady* used to come to her and take baby Lakshmi home every now and then probably to their mission house. There she was taught a prayer to Jesus Christ. One day the poor mother grew suddenly worse but the doctor-lady was gone a journey and a *devadasi* arrived there just in the nick of time. She made her proposal to little Lakshmi's mother to take her away and marry her to the Gods, tempting her with the manifold advantages of such a life, namely, beautiful dresses, jewels to wear, and no fear of widowhood. The mother hesitated for a time but when her last hour came, persuaded herself that it could not be wrong to leave her little one to holy gods and the gods heard her prayer and kept their watch over the girl. Lakshmi was then taken to the Hindu temple in a bullock cart. Many other children dwelt in the temple and were being

trained for marriage to the gods. The training was both of the body and the mind and Miss Mayo has not missed the opportunity to glance at it in her usual way. Lakshmi gradually began to see what was coming. "The priest can't wait, said one of her comrades one day." And the short sentence had a world of meaning. Tara a rich man's ten-year old daughter who had come to the temple before her one day hoisted the danger signal and got this reply from Lakshmi, 'I am not a coward, they shall not make me do it. You shall see.' Tara drowned herself when her turn came. Under ever-present foreboding her child soul sickened and sank. Here it is sought to make out that her Christian guardian angel summoned her and one nightfall shrouding her bright raiment with the servant's scarf she contrived with mouse-like cunning to slip out of the house and lose herself in the mass of pilgrims pressing to and fro through the temple street. "In and out through the crowd she wove, knowing nothing of way or place, conscious only of the terror at her back. To run she dared not; lest some one ask her why. Yet, presently, seeing beyond the temple purlieus a wider, less peopled street, she darted toward it, in the instinct for space.

“But just as she cleared the press of traffic, some idler’s hand snatching at her scarf, tore it away, exposing her tell-tale temple dress.

“A devadasi ! A Slave of the Gods ! A run-away !” shouted the idler, giving chase. And the pilgrim pack turned after him in full cry.

“Lakshmi ran-ran-ran-as fast as fear could speed her. Her heart hammered cold in her throat. The world whirled around her. ‘Lighten-our-darkness-defend-us-perils-and-dangers’—she panted. But they gained—they were closing in upon her—her strength was spent.....

“And then it happened.

“Out of a doorway stepped a lady—her face was white. Lakshmi saw the face—and with one last sobbing cry sprang into the lady’s outstretched arms. ‘For-the-love-of-our-Saviour-Jesus-Christ, she gasped aloud, and fainted dead away.

“The lady faced the crowd. ‘What means all this ?’ she demanded.

“It is a devadasi—a temple prostitute. She belongs to our Gods. She has run away. Give her to us ! Give her here ! We will take her back to the Brahmans,’ shouted many voices, half frenzied, wholly threatening.

"But the lady seemed to grow suddenly tall.

'This child has claimed my help in the name of Jesus Christ, *my* Lord; the words rang like a bell, clear and slow. 'Fall back !'

Devdashi indeed ! Long before her saviours appeared she had assured Tara 'I am not a coward, they shall not make me do it. You shall see.' That is where Lakshmi is Lakshmi, that is where she is the girl of the poor Bramhin widow who in the supreme hour of life when she was closing her eyes even on her own little sad world commended her dear child to the gods, I thank the Christian ladies who may have helped her in getting out of this life of shamé. But Heaven helps those who help themselves. Lakshmi was the gold for a' that. How hard she struggled for freedom. A seven year old girl actually married to virtue as the story itself shows She was not one of those devadasis whom the rascally priests could bend to their vicious will. If there had been devadasis like Lakshmi and Tara the institution could not have merited the well-deserved contempt which has made its abolition imperative. We can very well see that the institution came into being because once a section of Hindu girls flocked to the protection of the gods:singing.

This world is all a fleeting show,
 For man's illusion given ;
 The smiles of Joy, the tears of Woe,
 Deceitful shine, deceitful flow—
 There's nothing true but Heaven !

God fulfills himself in many ways lest one good custom should corrupt the world. But still the custom was perfectly spiritual in its origin and was poles asunder from giving religious sanction to prostitution and making it a part and parcel of religious rites as was the case with Greece, Babylon, Biblis, Cyprus and Corinth and some other places where regular schools of vice grew up under the shadow of the temple. As we have ceased to be real slaves of gods we are taking their names, as in the case of other customs also, for our own baser end.

The Raja of a certain Central Indian state was ill of a grave sickness. As it did not yield to the treatment of the court physicians including the English doctors, the childless first Rani, who was very jealous of the second Rani and her boy, afraid of widowhood, got a great sorcerer to cure the Raja of his illness. The sorcerer's prescription was that one of the

subjects of the Raja should enter into his life to strengthen that which ebbs. The Raja summoned all his household, raised himself on his bed and made this appeal :—"Oh my people, unless one of you will give his life for mine I die." Then in that competition of life-giving everybody said "Father, Take me ! Take me !" but the gentle second Rani thinking that the costliest sacrifice was necessary offered her own son and sank unconscious into her women's arms. But a palace woman came to her rescue and offered her son and he was finally accepted. And at night a strong sorcering was made after which the son of the palace woman was dealt with till his life passed from him. The small body of the boy was then dropped into a pond in the centre of the women's court-yard. The sorcerer was paid heavily and dismissed. The Raja, however, died in three days' time. That night the palace woman who substituted her own son for the second Rani's son in aid of the Raja was quietly smothered in her bed. The matter leaked out through court jealousy. And those who had not been chosen to witness the operation on the palace woman's child approached the Viceroy's agent and told him everything !

An investigation was held and the first Rani was sent away with a fair allowance of gold without any public disgrace. And the second ruled the state as regent of the state. The holy sorcerer made off with his gold bag beyond the reach of the strictest search.

This is a story without a moral. It is perhaps meant to make known the terrible amount of superstition and ignorance that prevail even amongst the Indian women of the highest rank. As it does not attack any custom or institution and only aims at illustrating to what length superstition and ignorance can go in India, suffice it to say that even if true it only proves a common human weakness. We are dealing with the greatest of modern sorcerers, a pastmaster in the art of conjuring up hideous phantoms and can afford to pass over the peccadilloes of lesser ones. But the sorcerer whose services were requisitioned by the Bara Rani is entitled to our respect for enunciating a very healthy doctrine bearing on the success of his operation. He says "while I work, refrain yourselves utterly from the thought of a white monkey with black face." Miss Mayo sometimes puts the right advice in the right place in spite of herself.

AN UNTOUCHABLE

A General, while a party was discussing over coffee the relative merits of the Gurkhas, Sikhs and Marathas as fighters, in his quarters, got disgusted with the praise of the type familiar to the limelight. His coffee-warmed heart then brimmed over with sympathy for and admiration of the non-combatant untouchables and he chose to play their champion. After parading his knowledge of Hinduism and the genesis of the untouchables who form the sweepers' contingent in every Indian regiment he made his medical officer tell his story of how *they made a man of this maggot, this sweeper, this untouchable*. The old head sweeper of the contingent was blessed with a high order of intelligence and spirit. And along with the usual job of sweeping he had a hobby for fighting. No sooner does an action begin than he lifts a rifle from a fallen soldier, then dashes for the front line and jolly well sticks there, a *combatant among the combatants*. Then before he is needed he is back where he should be among

the sweepers. The medical officer once discovered this old chap's deadbody in the front line position, a bullet between the eyes, the hand still gripping a rifle. Then he was told the whole story about the strange old man. Unobserved he had fought in at least ten engagements. The medical officer, Gordon, was now full of those sweepers. Convinced of their possibilities by the martial spirit of the dead old sweeper he decided to embark on the enterprise of making these maggots into men. He got the sanction of the General to make them nice tin latrine-pails which dispensed with the use of hands. The next step was to put a more pucca uniform on the sweepers and make them a decent unit of the regiment. It was all for the old head sweeper's sake who died a soldier's death. The latrine-tins made, the uniform evolved, the sweepers turned out all neatly identical, he chose them a chief named Gubbo. Now this Gubbo was a still more plucky fellow. He was an utter stranger to fear. All this was in Mespot when the English had a terrible time of it in retaking Kut. Gubbo though a mere sweep helped in turning many an ugly corner. Once he was engaged in shooting

down many a Turkish sniper oblivious of his own duty and his non-combatant status. Once he was quietly annexing stray Turkish rifles and stowing them away among the sweepers' kit. But his crowning act was the carrying of a backload of small arms-ammunition up the trenches under direct shell fire getting it up to the British soldiers who were then short of ammunition and who without Gubbo's self-devotion had nothing but their bayonets to meet the Turks' attack.

This is the process, for which much credit has been taken, of making maggots into men. A better latrine-pail and a pucca uniform, and a maggot mounts up to a man! The sixteen year old sweeper boy squatting out in the blistering sun, sings as loud as he could shout while with his bare hand he cleans latrine-pails. Though the worst untouchable, he had enough of man in him to sing at his cleaning up work. Neither the old sweep nor Gubbo was taught by anybody to fight, on the contrary, they had to do it on the sly, not without the risk of being seriously dealt with, nay, court-martialed, but they still blossomed into such capital soldiers that but for some of their brave acts a line of

God. Here the caste is really a guinea's stamp, a natural system of classifying and labelling indispensable for smooth social work, but man's the gold for a'that. Or, there could not have been so many low caste saints as Kabir under the protection of Hinduism. Here every man stands on the dignity of his manhood, self-contained and contented and does not care whether he is travelling in a third class, second class, or first class compartment towards his God. We all know the story of the shoe-maker saint. His reply to the request of his friends to bathe in the Ganges on a certain important festival day has enriched our literature, "If the mind knows its business then the Ganges is in this shoe-making mould of mine." And the Ganges obeyed his command. A true Hindu has no other ambition than the ambition of serving his society and through that his God. He recognises no other aristocracy than the aristocracy of service. God when He made a *Sudra* endowed him with the patience, forbearance and nourishing and productive capacity of the mother earth. What can

common mother of humanity, the patient, affectionate, perennially suffering and sacrificing earth which gives shelter to all animals, all forms of life, all kinds of matter and is only trodden under foot for her pains. What matters it to the *Sūdra* how the Brahmin treats him? Knowing his own worth, the nature of the invaluable service he renders to society, no contempt, no persecution, no inhuman custom or law touches him. A caste-proud foolish Brahmin may not allow him to cross his path, but a whole host of sages have worked for him, have thought for him, have felt for him and brought to his own door the sublime *vedic* truths themselves in the plain, simple, beautiful garb of the *Puranas*. He enjoys the company of a *Prahlad* and a *Dhruba*. A *Hanuman*, a *Narad*, a *Kabir*, a *Nanak*, a *Tulsidas*, a *Surdas*, a *Chaitanya*, a *Narshi*, some of them very lower class people themselves, have lived a spiritual life for him, have run a godly race for him and have enriched him beyond all measure by placing at his disposal a wealth of folk songs which has hardly any parallel and which keeps him happy and contented wherever his lot might be cast, be it deep down in the bowels of the earth or near the Officers' Latrines on a battle front. Hinduism

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common mother of humanity, the patient, affectionate, perennially suffering and sacrificing earth, which gives shelter to all animals, all forms of life, all kinds of matter and is only trodden under foot for her pains. What matters it to the *Sūdra* how the Brahmin treats him? Knowing his own worth, the nature of the invaluable service he renders to society, no contempt, no persecution, no inhuman custom or law touches him. A caste-proud foolish Brahmin may not allow him to cross his path, but a whole host of sages have worked for him, have thought for him, have felt for him and brought to his own door the sublime *vedic* truths themselves in the plain, simple, beautiful garb of the *Puranas*. He enjoys the company of a *Prahlad* and a *Dhruba*. A *Hanuman*, a *Narad*, a *Kabir*, a *Nanak*, a *Tulsidas*, a *Surdas*, a *Chaitanya*, a *Narshi*, some of them very lower class people themselves, have lived a spiritual life for him, have run a godly race for him and have enriched him beyond all measure by placing at his disposal a wealth of folk songs which has hardly any parallel and which keeps him happy and contented wherever his lot might be cast, be it deep down in the bowels of the earth or near the Officers' Latrines on a battle front. Hinduism,

is more than a mother to all that have the good fortune to live and grow under its protecting wings. It hardly produces any bitterness in the heart. The scavenger, the cobbler as also the Bramhin of Hindu India knew that he was playing only a temporary part with its attendant advantages and disadvantages under the orders of the Maker of this drama of creation and lived and moved in his own majesty mostly unaffected by what others said or did.

Gubbo the scavenger, commanded this detachment. He cleaned up the latrine-pail but only as a labour assigned him by his God and never worried over its high and low nature. A soul which is thus unattached and free can work anywhere in any capacity in any station and put forth its highest and best. This is how Gubbo, the scavenger, became the most useful soldier when the whole British army in Mesopotamia was under the shadow of a terrible disaster. And that not under the sense of any necessity or compulsion but out of the normal healthy spirit of a real Hindu to do and dare for others. It is our critics who will have to perform their journey of eighty four lacs of births to reach out from a maggot to a man and under-

stand Hinduism. Maybe that devoid of the spirit the caste rules and customs are mere rigid cast-iron moulds. But then the reform should be in the direction of reviving the spirit of Hinduism,



Mission there. A class of Indian girls awaited her, anxious to be trained, and the great work was begun with a course in simple medicine, nursing and compounding, and with the establishment of a dispensary and hospital. Other qualified immigrants followed in quick succession from America and Britain; the first British medical woman to work in India was Miss Butler of the Church of England Zenana Mission, who arrived in 1880 and was posted in turn to Jubbulpore, Bhagalpur and Srinagar. Indian ladies quickly responded; the first was Mrs. Anandibai Joshi, who graduated in Pennsylvania in 1886 and returned to work at Kolhapur, but died within a few months of tuberculosis contracted in America. We cannot summarize the chapter on the pioneers who served India with so fine a courage, but any reference must include Dame Mary Scharlieb, still at work in Harley Street, who, arriving at Madras in 1886 as the wife of a barrister, was so moved by what she heard of the sufferings of Indian women that she qualified as a midwife, worked out a scheme for the provision of medical women for caste and *gorha* ladies, and herself with three others forced the Medical College to admit her as a student.

She finished her studies at the Women's Medical School in London and then did a few years of strenuous teaching and practice in Madras before ill-health compelled her retirement from India.

The position that these pioneers had to adjust themselves to was this. There were three classes of Indian women. The strictly *purdanashin* who in no circumstances would see man; respectable women of all classes who would never consult a man in childbirth or for diseases peculiar to women, but might do so for other diseases; low classes or disreputable women who did not mind whom they consulted. Even by the second class men doctors were little consulted except in a secondhand way; husbands would call on doctors to describe symptoms and bring back prescriptions. Changes there have been in the past half-century; yet the villages are much as they were, with little enlightenment and much old-fashioned prejudice, nor indeed have these prejudices vanished from the towns. So the women doctors have met a great need. Thanks to their devotion and persistent pressure on authority there are now 183 hospitals staffed by women, viz., 93 carried on by medical mission-

in childbirth and the high rate of infant mortality?

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That it was the most commonly observed practice even amongst our lower class people for a husband not to admit a child wife to his presence, of course, when Hinduism was Hinduism, may be inferred from the following incident related to me by Sj. Umesh Chandra Bose of patent medicine fame, a seventy-year old disciple of Srimat Vijoy Krishna Goswami.

In a certain coal-area a young Santhal couple

aries, 25 by the Women's Medical Service, and 62 by other medical women employed by Provincial Governments, Indian States, or local Committees. Few enough for a land of 320 millions, yet a great advance on the none of 1869. In the general hospitals of large towns there are women's wards; the Dufferin Fund is active in twelve provincial centres; the Women's Medical Service, some fifteen years old, has forty-two members; Delhi has its medical college staffed by women teaching 121 students of all races; medical colleges and schools elsewhere have over 400 women students; there is an All-India Association that looks after maternity and child welfare. This is an incomplete summary of what has been done. One of the most encouraging developments is the zest with which Indian ladies have taken to medicine. The great need, says this book, is for more women's hospitals and for a better distribution, so that there shall not be two or three in one place and large areas without medical aid; it ends with the question, will Indians who now have the power be more ready than their predecessors to help forward the medical relief of women and especially to reduce the terrible toll of suffering and death

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